THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS AND THEIR SIGHTED PARTNERS' PARTICIPATION IN INCLUSIVE SOCIAL BALLROOM DANCE.

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DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

Ballroom and Latin American dance appear to be gaining popularity among people with disabilities, as a form of exercise and leisure activity. However, the majority of research conducted in this field seems to have focused on the physicality of dancers' movements, while overlooking their unique interpretations of such an experience. Furthermore, there appears to be a dearth of literature on the experience of dance for visually impaired individuals. The aim of this study was to give a voice to the lived experience of visually impaired dancers and their sighted partners who participate in inclusive social ballroom and Latin American dance. The participants were members of the Differently-abled Dance Class that was held by the dance society of a university situated in the Western Cape, South Africa. This qualitative study was conducted within the theoretical framework of the social theory of disability.

Method: The processes of data collection and data analysis were conducted according to the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis. The sample consisted of nine participants (i.e. four visually impaired dancers and five of their sighted partners) with whom I conducted semi-structured, in-depth, individual interviews.

Findings and discussion: The experiences of the visually impaired and sighted participants in dance consisted of the accumulation of findings discussed herein. The dancers described many physical, social and psychological benefits of, and challenges from, their participation in inclusive social dance. Such benefits appear to have encouraged and promoted the dancers sustained participation in the class. Ballroom and Latin American dance were described by both the visually impaired and sighted dancers as being a setting in which heteronormative, stereotypical gender roles were reinforced, regardless of a dancer's (dis)ability. The visually impaired dancers expressed a desire to look good and to fit in with their sighted partners, as well as to disguise their impairment as far as possible when performing for an audience. As such, these dancers appear to believe that there is an expectation imposed on them by society to appear sighted when they participate in the visual spectacle of dance. The concerns of inclusion and accessibility seemed to be a point of contention between the visually impaired and the sighted dancers, with the latter holding the belief that the dance society may have achieved a higher level of inclusion than was described by the former. However, the participants agreed that more could be done to establish the further inclusion and

integration of all of the dancers in the society, regardless of their (dis)ability. Dancing with a visually impaired partner appears not only to have challenged and changed the sighted participants' preconceptions of their visually impaired partners, but also of the people with disabilities with whom they came into contact outside of the dance society. The changing of such preconceptions, however, might lend itself to the admiration and idealisation of visually impaired individuals, which was evident in the sighted participants' reports. Insights into the world of disability were discussed in terms of the reports given by the participants.

OPSOMMING

Dit lyk asof baldans en Latyns-Amerikaanse dans al hoe meer gewild raak onder mense met gestremdhede, as ’n vorm van oefening en ontspanningsaktiwiteit. Dit kom egter voor of die meerderheid van navorsing in hierdie veld tot op hede op die fisiese komponent van dansers se bewegings gefokus het, en terselfdertyd besig is om hulle unieke interpretasies van die ervaring mis te kyk. Verder lyk dit of daar ’n gebrek aan literatuur oor die ervaring van dans vir visueel gestremde individue is. Die doel van hierdie studie is om ’n stem te gee aan die geleefde ervaring van visueel gestremde dansers en hulle siende dansmaats wat aan inklusiewe sosiale baldans en Latyns-Amerikaanse dans deelneem. Die deelnemers was lede van die *Differently-abled Dance Class* (gestremde dansklas) wat aangebied is deur die dansvereniging van ’n universiteit in die Wes-Kaap, Suid-Afrika. Hierdie kwalitatiewe studie is uitgevoer binne die teoretiese raamwerk van die sosiale teorie van gestremdheid.

Metode: Die prosesse van data-insameling en data-analise is in ooreenstemming met die beginsels van interpretatiewe fenomenologiese analise uitgevoer. Die steekproef het bestaan uit nege deelnemers (d.i. vier visueel gestremde dansers en vyf van hulle siende dansmaats) met wie ek semi-gestruktureerde, in-diepte individuele onderhoude gevoer het.

Bevindings en besprekings: Die ervarings van die visueel gestremde en siende deelnemers aan dans het bestaan uit die akkumulasie van bevindings hierin bespreek. Die dansers het baie fisiese, sosiale en sielkundige voordele, en uitdagings, voortspruitend uit hulle deelname aan inklusiewe sosiale dans beskryf. Dit kom voor of hierdie voordele die dansers se volgehoue deelname aan die klas aangemoedig en bevorder het. Baldans en Latyns-Amerikaanse dans is deur beide die visueel gestremde en siende dansers beskryf as dat dit ’n omgewing was waarin hetero-normatiewe, stereotipiese genderrolle gehandhaaf is, ongeag van die danser se gestremdheid of nie-gestremdheid. Die visueel gestremde dansers het ’n begeerte uitgedruk om goed te lyk en om in te pas by hulle siende dansmaats, so wel as om hulle gestremdheid so ver as moontlik weg te steek tydens uitvoerings voor ’n gehoor. As sodanig, blyk dit dat hierdie dansers glo dat die samelewing die verwagting op hulle afdwing om siende voor te kom wanneer hulle aan die visuele vertoning van dans deelneem. Dit wil voorkom of die kwessies van inklusie en toeganklikheid ’n twispunt tussen die visueel gestremde en siende dansers was, met die

laasgenoemde wat glo dat die dansvereniging moontlik ’n hoër vlak van inklusie behaal het as wat die eersgenoemde beskryf het. Die deelnemers het wel saamgestem dat meer gedoen kan word om die verdere inklusie en integrasie van al die dansers in die vereniging te bewerkstellig, ongeag van hulle gestremdheid of nie-gestremdheid. Dit wil voorkom of om te dans met ’n visueel gestremde dansmaat die siende deelnemers se vooroordele nie net oor hulle visueel gestremde dansmaats bevraagteken en verander het nie, maar ook oor die mense met gestremdhede waarmee hulle buite die dansvereniging in kontak gekom het. Hierdie verandering ten opsigte van sodanige vooroordele kan egter die bewondering en idealisering van visueel gestremde individue tot gevolg hê, wat duidelik geblyk het uit die siende deelnemers se verslae. Insigte in die wêreld van gestremdheid is bespreek aan die hand van die verslae wat die deelnemers gegee het.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The arena of sport, exercise and physical activity have long been considered as a context for human development and self-actualisation. There is an extensive body of literature suggesting that physical activity enables well-being and health (Biddle & Mutrie, 2007). Sport and exercise are often idealised and seen as a “golden road” to well-being (see Biddle & Mutrie, 2007; United Nations, n.d.). However, the idealisation of sport and exercise obscures the fact that these pursuits are sometimes harmful and often exclusionary in nature (United Nations, n.d.).

People with disabilities are among the groups of people who are sometimes excluded from participation in physical activity and leisure pursuits. The reasons for exclusion, which have been cited throughout the review of literature in Chapter Three, include: a lack of funding or facilities; the inadequate training of instructors and coaches; and an underestimation of the abilities of individuals with disabilities (see Lieberman & Houston-Wilson, 1999; Shields, Synnot & Barr, 2011; Wegner & Struthers, 2011).

Although the field of physical activity has been extensively researched, there is an assumption that opportunities for greater participation need to be created. There is also a dearth of literature exploring the social interventions and the experiences of participation and exclusion of individuals with disabilities from such activities (Sherrill, 2003). For the purpose of this study, the following definitions of the terms “disability” and “impairment” will be used. Disability is understood to be an act of exclusion from participating equally with others in the normal life of the community, due to physical, social and political barriers (Goodley, 2011). The same author defines impairment as a physical, mental or sensory limitation.

Refining the focus to people with visual impairments and how they describe their experiences of living with such a limitation is an important element in understanding what life is like for these individuals. As an impairment is experienced differently by every person who is affected, it has a variety of unique meanings ascribed to it, including within the context of physical activity. This reality calls for the undertaking of more studies of a qualitative nature than have been done in the past.

In the context of physical activity, dance or more specifically, partnered or couples' dancing, is a form of sport that has been the focus of limited research in South Africa. The interaction between two individuals during this dynamic process can have a significant effect, not only on the flow of the movement, but also on the individuals themselves. Such interaction might have a further impact on individuals experience of dance, as well as on their experiences of the world beyond the dance studio. The exploration and documentation of the experiences of persons with disabilities who dance is complimented by investigating whether such experiences have a different effect on the dance partner with a visual impairment than on the abled dance partner.

Young and middle-aged adults also appear to have been under-represented in research studies in the field of disability and dance, while the focus has primarily been on children, adolescents and the elderly (see, for example, Cooper & Thomas, 2002; Goodwin, Krohn & Kuhnle, 2004; Houston, 2005; Jay, 1991; Zitomer, 2011). So far, studies in partnered dance for adults with disabilities appear to have focused more on the physicality of movement through the medium of dance, rather than on the individual's subjective experience (see Larsson & Frändin, 2006; Marchant, Sylvester & Earhart, 2010; Paxton, Kilcoyne & Mount, 1993). It is for these reasons that I sought to explore how visually impaired university students and their sighted partners experienced participation in inclusive social ballroom dance.

Gladys Bullock (2010), an experienced South African ballroom dancing instructor, examiner and adjudicator, who focuses on providing opportunities for social dance classes to those with physical and mental challenges, states that ballroom dancing is "the third largest and fastest growing participation sport in South Africa" (Proposal for future development, para. 1). She clarifies this statement, however, by saying that such a finding only relates to able-bodied dancers. There appears to be a scarcity of knowledge surrounding the sport of inclusive ballroom dance and the lived experience of participants with disabilities, particularly in the case of visual impairment. The majority of studies that have been done so far seem to focus on wheelchair dance. Furthermore, there seem to be very few dance studios in South Africa where people with a visual impairment may take classes and participate in the activity.

In order to conduct this study, I approached the dance society at a university that is situated in the Western Cape. The participants stated that they are a social society that

aims to encourage the principle of inclusion through the medium of ballroom and Latin American dance. This dance society purports to be welcoming and accommodating to adults, students and children alike. One of their classes is a Differently-abled Class that is open to students with any form of (dis)ability. According to the university website, the dance society refers to the class for people with disabilities as the “Differently-abled (Dance) Class”, so, as such, I shall follow this convention of terminology throughout the report. As the term “differently abled” appears to be controversial in the field of disability studies (Longmore, 1985), I use it sparingly. As an alternative, I make use of such terms as “people with disabilities” or “visually impaired individuals”, including variations of such terms. The participants stated that their dance instructor was well-established in the community, with many years of dance experience teaching dancers with varied levels of (dis)ability. According to the participants, the motto of the society, which was “nothing is impossible”, filtered through the interactions of the dance instructor, the committee members and the society members. The dance society aspires to be a positive, and fun, environment in which the well-being of its members was the utmost priority.

The aim of the current study was to convey an understanding of, and to give a voice to, the experiences of both young adults with visual impairments and their sighted partners, who participate in inclusive social ballroom dance. I felt that this was important, because the meanings that can be ascribed to individuals’ experiences are often overlooked in research, despite the potential of providing unique insights. The following four research questions, therefore, guided the current study:

1) What is the lived experience of university students with visual impairments who participate in social ballroom dance classes with other sighted students?
2) What is the lived experience of sighted university students who partner visually impaired students in social ballroom dance?
3) How do visually impaired university students describe the effects of participation in inclusive social ballroom dance on their life?
4) How do sighted university students describe the experience of partnering a visually impaired dancer, and the impact of this experience on their life?

In order to answer the research questions given above, I conducted this qualitative study using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) within the theoretical paradigm of

social theory. An in-depth explanation of social theory is given in Chapter Two, while IPA is described in detail in Chapter Three.

CHAPTER TWO
SOCIAL THEORY OF DISABILITY

2.1 Introduction

This study has been undertaken within the paradigm of the social theory of disability, which is described in this chapter. In order to place the social theory of disability within its historical context, a brief description of the medical model from which the social theory was developed will be given. This is followed by an explanation of the social theory. A critique of the social theory is then formulated. This includes a discussion of the direction in which future studies might progress beyond the perceived limitations of the medical model and social theory.

2.2 Medical model

According to Longmore (2003), the medical model views disability as “physiological, psychological and functional pathologies” (p. 1). Longmore (2003) further states that, according to the medical model, the problem of disability lies within the body of an “afflicted” person. Barnes (2012) states that the medical model views disability as “an individual medical problem or ‘personal tragedy’” (p. 12). Physical impairments are considered to be “the root cause of disabled people’s problems” (Barnes & Mercer, 1997, p. 5). The medical model is also said to have overlooked such contextual matters as the social, economic, and political influences on the lives of people with disabilities (Longmore, 2003; Roulstone, Thomas & Watson, 2012).

The medical model views able-bodied people as “normal”, while people with disabilities are considered to be “abnormal” and “diseased”, and seen as “lacking the equipment for social integration” (Brisenden, 1998, p. 23). The medical model posits that health and social care professionals be tasked with the “treatment” of disability (Roulstone et al., 2012). In addition, Brisenden (1998) states that the medical model views difference from the perspective of prospective treatments and cures for the “patient”, while disregarding the individual’s right to decide whether the treatment enhances the overall economy of their life. This position reflects the dominance of professionals as the key decision-makers in the medical model, as highlighted by Shakespeare (2006).

Longmore (2003) states that a definition of disability as a “pathological medical condition” (p. 20) leads to the individualisation of socio-economic disadvantage, which suggests that people with disabilities are limited in functioning appropriately within society. From this perspective, disability is regarded as hindering people with disabilities from performing “major activities”. Such major activities are defined as those age-appropriate actions that are typically expected of able-bodied individuals, such as the school attendance of children and the holding down of a paid job by adults (Longmore, 2003). Rather than focusing on issues of accessibility and the inclusion of people with disabilities in society, the medical model view of disability led to the institutionalisation, the hospitalisation, and the general removal of people with disabilities from society (Brisenden, 1998).

The medical model tends to overlook the opinions and voices of people with disabilities (Shakespeare, 2006). This model is considered to be a highly individualised and overly medicalised way of thinking (Shakespeare, 2008). Shakespeare (2008) clarifies, however, by stating that, “it is not medicine, but inappropriate medicalisation which is the root of the problem” (p. 11). It was further stated by Shakespeare (2006) that the medical model has “become a proxy for all that is wrong with traditional attitudes to disability” (p. 18). Because this view of disability excluded the social implications and neglected the collective experiences of people with disabilities, the disability rights movement began to look beyond the focus on the biomedical limitations of disability toward a more inclusive social theory of disability.

2.3 Social theory

In response to the limitations of the medical model, the social theory was developed with a focus on understanding social exclusion and barriers, rather than only the physiological concerns of disability. People with disabilities are, therefore, seen to be “disabled” by the exclusionary constraints presented by society. Brisenden (1998) explained the social model in the following way:

> We are disabled by buildings that are not designed to admit us, and this in turn leads to a whole range of further disablements regarding our education, our chances of gaining employment, our social lives, and so on. The disablement lies in the construction of society, not in the physical condition of the individual (p. 24).

According to Shakespeare (2006) and Blackmore and Hodgkins (2012), the social model of disability came about when Paul Hunt wrote a letter to *The Guardian* newspaper in 1972 that called for a consumer group to represent individuals with disabilities living in institutions. The result of this letter was the creation of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS), who championed the use of a social theory. Their aim was to highlight disability as a "collective identity marker and minority grouping that was subject to prejudice, discrimination and exclusion" (Blackmore & Hodgkins, 2012, p. 72). More specifically, their aim was to "replace segregated facilities with opportunities for people with impairments to participate fully in society, to live independently, to undertake productive work and to have full control over their own lives" (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 11). Although UPIAS is considered to be the inspiration behind the British disability movement and forerunners of the social theory; its membership, in its conception, was limited to those with physical impairments (Shakespeare, 2006).

The impact of the social theory enabled those with disabilities to view society as being problematic and requiring change, thus encouraging the redirection of focus away from themselves as the "problem" and the only agent of change (Shakespeare, 2006). As a result of this impact, those with disabilities were empowered to campaign for equal rights and for inclusion in society (Shakespeare, 2006). The aim of the current study is to have the voices and opinions of visually impaired dancers heard, with regard to their experiences of equality and inclusion within the dance society. The research questions asked in the current study reflect the views of the social theory by focusing on the social experience of the participants and on the impact of the dance class on the lives of both the visually impaired and sighted dance partners concerned. The way in which I analysed the data (see Chapters Five and Six) highlights the issues of representation and the barriers to inclusion that were experienced by the dancers in the Differently-abled Class at the time of the study. These issues and barriers are discussed as challenges that the dance society still has to overcome in order to promote the principles of participation, inclusion and accessibility. The challenges surrounding inclusion and representation need to be dealt with adequately in order to prevent them having a "disabling" effect on the participation of the visually impaired dancers, thereby enabling students with disabilities to accept the opportunities provided by the society for them to participate in inclusive social ballroom dance.

In the light of the distinction drawn by social theory between the terms “disability” and “impairment”, the current study conforms to the theory’s convention on terminology (see Chapter One, paragraph 3, for the definition of terms used in this study). As such, the term “disability” was aptly referred to by Blackmore and Hodgkins (2012) in their statement: “In other words, to be defined as a ‘flawed’ body is simultaneously to be defined as incapable of adequate social participation” (p. 71). This concept of disability is located beyond the ambit of the individual’s embodied abilities, and is regarded as being comprised of the social oppression of the collective (Shakespeare, 2006). An “impairment” refers to the physiological nature of the embodied limitation or difference in people with physical disabilities. Furthermore, an impairment is seen as a functional limitation resulting from either a physical, mental or sensory impairment located within the individual (Shakespeare, 2006). The impairment/disability distinction is, therefore, described by Shakespeare (2006) as consisting of a dichotomy within the social model. Due to the unique and exclusive social nature of social theory, it lends itself to critiques surrounding the perspective of the individual’s embodied experience of impairment.

2.4 A critique of social theory

Shakespeare (2006) states that the weaknesses of social theory have reached a point where they are outweighed by the strengths. He highlighted many concerns with social theory that still require addressing. The most noticeable shortfall of social theory, according to Barnes and Mercer (1997) and Shakespeare (2006), is the distinction that is drawn between impairment and disability that downplays the role of the impairment in the lives of those with disabilities, while asserting that social change can bring about the removal of disability. Shakespeare (2006) believes the claims of social theory to be an unattainable utopian concept of inclusion, as “even in the most accessible world, there will always be residual disadvantage attached to many impairments” (p. 50). In terms of the current study, participation in the Differently-abled Class appears to be in a perpetual state of flux. Membership grows and new students are recruited every year, and yet there is a high attrition rate due to the academic commitments and the graduation of the students involved. For this reason, a barrier-free environment would be difficult to establish for the class, as every new member brings with them their own unique challenges.

Furthermore, the concept of a barrier-free world is concerned with placing people with disabilities on an even footing with able-bodied individuals by making impairments

irrelevant. Shakespeare (2006) is of the belief that a barrier-free world is a futile ideal, as his examples show how there can be no real symmetry or equality between people with disabilities and their abled counterparts. He appears to contend that this may be due to the limiting nature of impairments that social theorists fail to take into account. The concept of equality might remain a concern in the Differently-abled Class as long as the sighted dancers continue to be invited by the dance instructor to dance with a visually impaired partner. While the participants agreed with the reasons for abiding by such a convention, its continued existence might (already have) create(d) a hierarchy between the visually impaired and the sighted dancers. The visually impaired dancers' impairment, by its very nature, will always create a need for a different form of instruction in the class, compared to the style of instruction that is used with the sighted dancers.

Barnes and Mercer (1997) highlight how people with disabilities have brought into awareness the socially disadvantaging nature of both biological and social factors that have been disregarded by academic social researchers. From the social perspective, biological impairments are seen to exist only in the context of social disadvantage and exclusion. However, Shakespeare (2006) states that impairments can cause discomfort, which, in itself, can have a disabling effect that cannot be rectified or eliminated through social change. The visually impaired participants did not declare any physical discomfort or pain from their impairment that might have had an effect on their experience of dance. They did, however, speak about the anxiety that they experienced because they could not see how they looked when they danced. A further cause of anxiety was due to the close physical proximity of their partner, which is the typical convention in ballroom dance. Such anxiety appears to be caused by the participants' biological impairment in a social context. Dance is also considered by the participants to be a medium through which they can confront and overcome these and other social anxieties.

Lastly, Shakespeare (2006) highlights how the social model has not changed substantially since its conception in the 1970s. While this model has offered those with disability a political platform that "provided the basis for a stronger sense of identity" (Shakespeare, 2006, p. 33), it has not been revised or developed beyond this point. Nor has it responded to criticism or adjusted to compensate for changing circumstances, in the same way as other models and theories have done.

As a progression from the shortcomings of the medical model and the social theory of disability, “body becoming” and “new materialist” theories have emerged from the feminist philosophy of the body and from feminist studies of science, respectively. Rice (2014) describes body becoming theory as: “the becoming of participants’ embodied selves as ongoing and open ended, as historically and socially constructed, and as determined by many forces, including their own psychic creativity and the biological agency of their bodies” (p. 27). Rice (2014) further states that a becoming theory of embodiment constructs a narrative of embodied self-becoming in terms of contextually sensitive contemporary culture.

Body becoming and new materialist theories are considered to theorise bodies as systems that develop and materialise through their own agency, as well as through external forces that act upon them. It is postulated that bodies emerge through interaction, as opposed to existing prior to interaction. Physical and social environments, cultural contexts and personal habits are believed to mould a person’s physical being. As a result, it is difficult to determine what precise shape any particular person’s body will ultimately have. The focus, therefore, is on the fulfilment of the open-ended nature of each body, which conceptually serves to unify both the biological/medical and the social models of the body (Rice, Chandler, Harrison, Liddiard & Ferrari, 2015). It might, therefore, be beneficial to consider applying the body becoming and new materialist theories in future studies in the field of disability and dance.

2.5 Conclusion

Of the two main schools of thought in disability studies, namely the medical model and social theory, the current study is placed within the context of the latter. Although the social theory was born out of the limitations of the medical model, this does not imply that social theory is without its flaws. In an attempt to dethrone the medical model of disability, the social theory became focused on the collective social experience of disability, with little regard for the individuals who live with impairments. This is where a critique of the social theory became necessary. Emerging from the limitations of the social theory, new theories in disability studies are evolving. The body becoming and new materialist theories do not propose further countering of social theory. They can be viewed as a progression that has emerged from the limitations of both the medical model and social theory, and they should

be considered as potential frameworks within which to conduct future studies in the field of disability and dance.

CHAPTER THREE
LITERATURE REVIEW

Very few studies have been conducted on individuals with disabilities, particularly visually impaired individuals and their participation in inclusive dance. As the literature review below shows, the focus of research appears to have been mostly on children, adolescents and the elderly with physical impairments who participate in individualistic forms of dance, as well as on unstructured, informal forms of partnered dance, such as contact improvisation. In this review of the existing literature, few studies appear to have focused on such structured dance forms as ballroom and Latin American dance. This has left a significant gap in the body of research surrounding the experiences of young adults with visual impairments and their lived experience of ballroom and Latin American dance, especially in the South African context. For this reason, I begin the chapter with a focus on certain studies that have been undertaken to expose the facilitators of, and the barriers to, physical activity for people with disabilities. Following this, I explore selected studies pertaining to the issues of physical activity and visual impairment. A focus on participation in dance for individuals with disabilities leads into an exploration of studies that have focused purely on the topic of visual impairment and dance.

3.1 Facilitators of, and barriers to, physical activity for people with disabilities

This section begins with an exploration of existing studies on the physiological and social facilitators of, and barriers to, physical activity for people with disabilities. This is followed by a discussion of the psychological effects of participation in such activity for persons with disabilities.

3.1.1 Physiological and social aspects

Shields et al. (2011) systematically reviewed the barriers to, and facilitators of, physical activity for children with disabilities. Relevant articles were identified by means of a search performed on 10 electronic databases, covering the period up until September 2010. Of the 2 363 titles and abstracts searched, 14 articles met the inclusion criteria of their research study. The articles were required to examine either the barriers to, or the facilitators of, physical activity for children with disabilities, as well as to be written in English in order to be included in the authors' analysis. The facilitators identified by the

authors were: the child's desire to be active; the practising of skills; the involvement of peers; family support; the accessibility to and the proximity of facilities; the provision of enhanced opportunities; skilled staff; and the provision of information to parents. The barriers included a lack of knowledge and skills; the child's preferences; a sense of fear; parental behaviour; negative attitudes towards disability; the provision of inadequate facilities; a lack of transport, programmes and staff capacity; and the costs involved. This systematic review resulted in the identification of four categories, namely personal, social, environmental, and policy and programme-related barriers and facilitators. The authors of the review further acknowledge that the barriers to physical activity for children with disabilities have been more frequently and comprehensively studied in the past than have the facilitators.

Gross, Kroll and Morris (2013) examined the accessibility of fitness centres for people with disabilities in a region in North East Scotland that had both urban and rural characteristics. They conducted an observational study on the extent to which community physical environmental barriers exist in exercise facilities. They state that physical activity can assist in preventing such lifestyle conditions as heart disease, cancer and diabetes, as well as secondary complications arising from disabling conditions. These include pressure sores, muscle weakness, and depression. They also state that the reduced opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in physical activity further contribute to the disabling process. They found that the fitness centres included in the study had several environmental barriers for people with disabilities. Among the barriers were that the strength and aerobic equipment did not offer large enough seating surfaces for transfer onto in order for the person with disability to use the equipment; the centres offered neither gloves nor wraps to assist with gripping the exercise equipment; and there was no specialised exercise equipment for people with varying physical abilities. These findings were consistent with those of previous studies. A further finding of this study was that, although most of the fitness centres had accessible main fitness areas, most lacked elevator access to all of the floors and fitness areas. Although these findings are significant, it is necessary to mention the limitations of this study. According to Gross et al. (2013), the generalisability of this study is questionable because it was conducted on a specific population. They also state that the reliability and validity of the test instrument could benefit from further psychometric evaluation. Lastly, they expressed a feeling that the most important limitation of the study lay in the lack of subjective evaluation of the degree of accessibility involved from the perspective of people with disabilities.

In asking whether social inclusion should be a major goal in physical education, Sherrill (2003) clearly distinguishes between physical inclusion and social inclusion. She asserts that physical inclusion refers to individuals, with and without disabilities, “receiving instruction, with appropriate supports, in a common space” (p. 56). In contrast, social inclusion is the meaningful, satisfying, socially connected interaction between people with and without disabilities that contributes to the leading of an active, healthy lifestyle for all involved. The author further states that physical inclusion can be regulated and supported by law, as well as by administrative and instructional policies. However, social inclusion is only achieved through co-operative efforts shaped by home-school-community programmes in which inclusion is prioritised on a daily basis. Research shows that students both with and without disabilities do not tend to interact with one another unless there is a social intervention in place that requires and encourages speaking to, smiling, gesturing, or touching others. According to Sherrill (2003), there was a dearth of literature on the efficacy of social interventions in physical education, and of research into how to improve the quality and quantity of social interactions. She noted that there was a general assumption that an improvement in the number and quality of social interactions is likely to occur naturally, that is, without the support of interventions and instructional goals. The research she found appears to oppose this assumption, leading to the question of whether social inclusion as a major goal in physical education should be re-examined. Subsequent to the above question, Sherrill (2003) proposed that professionals be taught how to specifically assist children in achieving this goal.

In South Africa, and more specifically in the Western Cape, Wegner and Struthers (2011), focused on sports for learners with disabilities in ordinary public primary schools (i.e. in mainstream schools, as opposed to schools for children with special needs) as part of an inclusive education initiative. Their quantitative research study explored the types of sports available to learners with disabilities in ordinary public primary schools, and the factors influencing participation in such sports. The results showed that the learners in question were expected to participate in the sports already offered at the schools, with no adapted sports programmes being offered to them. Of the learners with disabilities at the schools investigated, 32% participated in school sports. In these instances, the reported barriers to participation in sport were poor teacher preparation and inadequate financial support.

3.1.2 Psychological effects of participation in physical activity for persons with disabilities

In terms of the psychological effects of physical activity for people with disabilities, Valliant, Bezzubyk, Daley and Asu (1985) conducted a quantitative study in which 161 individuals with physical impairments were included. Of the sample group, 139 participants were active in athletic competitions, or were involved in systematic training for an athletic event, whereas 22 of the participants were inactive. The reported sample included 61 persons in a wheelchair, 33 amputees, 46 blind persons, and 15 with cerebral palsy, who were all involved in athletics. The nonathletic sample of 22 included six amputees, four in wheelchairs, four blind, two with cerebral palsy, and six participants with combined disorders. This study focused on evaluating the presence of self-esteem and locus of control in both athletes and nonathletic persons with disabilities. They found that, all variables considered, participation in physical activity resulted in a significantly increased sense of self-esteem, greater life satisfaction and happiness, higher levels of externalisation, and higher education levels, compared to the nonathletic sample group. They also mention enhanced psychosocial functioning among the athletic sample.

As part of a systematic review of the existing literature, Caddick and Smith (2014) focused on, among other areas, the subjective and psychological effects of sport and physical activity on combat veterans with an acquired disability, such as limb amputation. Their findings show that two of the 11 studies reviewed discovered enhanced stress management in relation to combat-acquired disability through physical activity. Three studies described how participation in physical activity helped the veterans concerned to “feel good” (p. 13) in different ways. An increased or reawakened sense of enjoyment of life was also highlighted as a result of the veterans with disabilities once again being able to participate in such activity. Three studies considered the potential benefits offered by adaptive multi-sports camps to an improvement in the quality of life of veterans with disabilities. The consideration of quality of life in the studies included coverage of such domains as the physical, the psychological, the social and the environmental. From a psychological point of view, two of the studies found that participation in multi-sport events greatly improved the quality of life of the participants, while the third study found such participation to result in no significant improvement in terms of quality of life. However, although the findings obtained were not significant, the researchers observed a reduction

in mood disturbance of the participants and suggested that improvement in mood might require longer to take effect than the duration of their study.

Wright and Titus (2013) explored the experiences and perceptions of students with disabilities at a university situated in the Western Cape, South Africa, in terms of the factors influencing their participation in recreational sports. They conducted a qualitative study in which they interviewed five participants. While all five participants had prior experience with sport, none was actively involved in recreational sport at a tertiary level. The participants did, however, express awareness of the benefits of actively participating in recreational sports. They found that the desire to interact and to socialise encouraged active participation, which in turn led to increased cognitive awareness and an expression of internal motivation to engage in recreational sport on campus. In contrast, coercion to participate in sport, specifically at a particular skill level, resulted in a feeling of intimidation that negatively affected the desire to participate actively in leisure sports.

3.2 Physical activity and visual impairment

In their study with regard to overcoming the barriers to including students with visual impairments and deaf-blindness in physical education programmes, Lieberman and Houston-Wilson (1999) define physical activity as the movement of the body that leads to a disbursement of energy at a level above that of the resting metabolic rate. They state that, prior to their research, the benefits gained from participation in physical activity included a decreased risk of heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol levels, as well as reduced levels of stress. They went further to suggest that the social and psychological benefits found in previous studies of such participation were also significant, and included enhanced sleep patterns, an improved sense of self-esteem, increased stamina, and an improved attitude to life. According to these authors, prior research also shows that students who are physically active tend to display more appropriate behaviours and are less inclined to self-injurious or self-destructive behaviours. However, these findings might only apply to sighted students because visually impaired students are not given the same opportunities to be involved in regular physical activity, which suggests that they might not be able to attain the same psychological, social and physical benefits therefrom as do their sighted peers.

In their study, Lieberman and Houston-Wilson (1999) opted for a sample of 170 New York-based physical education teachers who attended a workshop on how to teach inclusive physical education. They broke their results down into three categories: teachers' barriers; students' barriers; and administrative barriers. With regard to the teachers' barriers, the researchers found that a lack of professional preparation to work with visually impaired students, restrictions on the curriculum and activities provided, the pace of the lessons, as well as feelings of fear, overprotection by the students' parents, and limited expectations, were the most significant barriers to inclusion. The students highlighted parental overprotection, a lack of opportunity and their own insecurities as being the most prominent barriers to inclusion in physical activity. The amount of time required, the lack of appropriate equipment, and blanket medical excuses from healthcare professionals were administrative barriers to including visually impaired students in physical education programmes. With such impediments in mind, Lieberman and Houston-Wilson (1999) recommended ways in which to resolve the barriers involved, and in which to increase the opportunities for visually impaired students to experience the same benefits from participating in physical activity as did their sighted peers.

Lieberman and McHugh (2001) extend the sentiments of Lieberman and Houston-Wilson (1999), as expressed in relation to the above-mentioned study, in arguing for the case of equality in inclusive physical education. They state that visually impaired students have an even greater need to be physically fit than do their sighted peers, due to the increased physical demands that are placed on them in their daily lives. For this reason, they took up the challenge of determining the health-related fitness of visually impaired children between the ages of nine and 19 years. The two main aims for the study were to evaluate the physical fitness of visually impaired students who participated in a summer camp, as well as to identify ways in which their fitness could be improved. Forty-six visually impaired students (26 girls, and 20 boys) were rated according to their performance on the Fitnessgram health-related fitness test. The test focused on four areas, namely: cardiovascular endurance; muscular strength and endurance; flexibility; and body composition. The results of this study brought attention to the fact that less than 20% of the visually impaired children passed at least four items on the test. Of the sighted children who had previously completed the test, 48% to 70% had achieved the same result. With these findings in mind, the activity level of participants in the Fitnessgram test could neither be established nor differentiated. This suggests that the children with visual impairments who performed poorly on the test were seen as being less fit than was an

inactive sighted peer group. Lieberman and McHugh (2001) highlight a situation where, for visually impaired children, the provision of few opportunities to partake in physical activities causes reduced levels of activity, resulting in a decreased ability to perform daily tasks, which, in turn, significantly affects the fitness levels of the children concerned. The existence of such a cycle causes further developmental delays, fears and a lack of self-confidence in their own abilities.

Ponchillia, Strause and Ponchillia (2002) conducted a study on the sports participation and attitudes of athletes with visual impairments. Their sample was made up of 159 members of the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA), with 23.9% of the participants being under 15 years of age, and 30.8% being aged between 16 and 28 years old. The average age of the participants was 25.4 years old, and the majority (64.0%) of the sample consisted of those of the male gender. The aim of the quantitative study was to explore the factors affecting the participation of visually impaired individuals in sport, as well as their attitudes toward sport. The most significant finding from the research related to the effect that participation in school activities had on subsequent sports participation. The researchers found that visually impaired individuals were more likely to participate in sports outside of school and after completing their schooling, if they had the opportunity to participate in sports at school. The authors concluded that visually impaired athletes were making significant progress towards integration in school, as well as in sporting events that were open to the public. Further, it is the authors' opinion that the introduction of the use of adaptive methods in sport opportunities geared specifically to visually impaired children is a crucial element in encouraging integration. Regarding the attitude of visually impaired athletes, the researchers found that the athletes who reached the highest levels of performance agreed that winning has little to do with luck; however, the athletes who had not achieved such levels expressed a belief that luck does play a role in winning. From this, the authors concluded that participation in high-level competition encourages a more realistic view of the role of luck in winning. What must also be kept in mind is that, for those participants who had never won a medal, winning was not the primary objective in their competing.

While all three of the above studies focused on visual impairment and physical activity, they all did so from a quantitative perspective. This left little room for the participants to give their version of events. Quantitative studies are better used for generalising to a

population, and while this is a necessary aspect of research, the experiences of the participants are often overlooked in such studies.

In a study conducted by Green and Miyahara (2007), the focus was on the lived experience of older adults with visual impairments who participated in a walking group. The aim of the study was to gain insight into the personal history of six visually impaired individuals (three men, and three women) to enable the creation of a context in which to interpret their current personal and situational factors. A second aim of the study was to examine the impact that participation in the walking group had on the participants' level of physical activity. In order to achieve this, the researchers made use of a mixed-method approach. The sample in this study included participants between the ages of 53 and 70 years old who had been members of the walking group for a period of between 1.5 and three years. In this older age group, similar barriers to participation in physical activity were noted as were encountered with the visually impaired students mentioned above. The older adults with visual impairments stated that such personal factors as the increased physical effort required for walking, and situational factors as a lack of opportunities to become involved in physical activity, were the most prominent barriers for them. However, the most relevant aspect of Green and Miyahara's (2007) study lies in its qualitative discovery of the participants' lived experience of visual impairment and participation in the walking group. They found that all of the participants experienced psychological, as well as lifestyle, gains from the walking group, such as an improved sense of confidence and self-esteem, increased self-worth and a raised level of independence. Through their phenomenological enquiry, they discovered that the walking group facilitated social interaction with their peers, who could meaningfully relate to their experiences of impairment. The group also offered the participants a supportive atmosphere in which they could physically and psychologically join, while enjoying a form of outdoor physical activity. The participants further acknowledged that they experienced benefits from interacting with their sighted guides. As with the current study, this interaction with sighted peers and the benefits to be gained therefrom is an important aspect that is still in need of further investigation.

In his dissertation, Larry Streeter (2007) explores participation in the extracurricular and non-academic activities of visually impaired students at an American university. Streeter (2007) conducted a heuristic inquiry into the supports and constraints affecting student participation in extracurricular activities. A total of 16 visually impaired participants, aged

between 18 and 25 years old, and of whom there was an equal number of men and women, were interviewed. The findings showed that the extent of participation related to: the ways in which the participants coped with barriers and constraints; the motivation to become involved in extracurricular activities; the degree of competency that they had in their blindness skills; the level of influence that their family, teachers and the community had; and their overall adjustment to their blindness. Recommendations included substantially altering and improving the university training programmes and practices for visually impaired professionals, and raising expectations, so as to result in positive outcomes for the visually impaired students.

3.3 Participation in dance for individuals with disabilities

This section is divided into two subsections, namely individualistic forms of dance, and partnered dance.

3.3.1 Individualistic forms of dance

Dance is an art that takes on many forms, and that is expressed in many different ways, such as ballet, modern dance, contemporary, hip hop, Latin American, and ballroom, to name but a few. It offers the participant a chance to experience their body in a new and challenging manner through emotive movement. Dance is a universal pastime that is enjoyed by many different cultures, religions and races for a variety of reasons. Some people dance as a form of exercise, and some cultures dance as a form of celebration, whereas some religious groups dance as a form of worship to their deity. However, regardless of the reason for the existence of dance, it is an activity that can be enjoyed by individuals of various ages, sizes, and levels of (dis)ability.

Participation in dance has long been assumed to improve an individual's general sense of well-being. The presumed psychological benefits include an improved sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-worth, as well as a happier disposition. In a qualitative study that was conducted with older people (of whom the majority were over 80 years old), Houston (2005) elicited statements from the participants regarding how much enjoyment they had gained from participating in dance classes. Apart from taking pride in their work, the participants noted that they regarded dance as a way of managing life and of assisting them to get through the week, as opposed to it merely being a way in which to heal their

bodies. In short, they enjoyed both the physical and the psychological benefits of dance. The physical benefits included increased levels of fitness, which were noticeable from their ability to climb stairs without losing their breath, as well as improved flexibility and independence. This was demonstrated through the participants' self-reported ability to cut their own toenails. From a psychological perspective, the participants reported feeling that they had more vigour than they had had before they joined the dance class. They reported that they became more open and interactive, and less self-focused, as well as spiritually stronger. The authors do not clarify what is meant by the phrase "spiritually stronger". From a social point of view, the participants reported that the dance class allowed them to bond as a group, as well as increased the potential for intergenerational contact. A few of the participants were wheelchair users, while some displayed a lack of mobility. More individualistic forms of dance were practised in the dance class, such as seated line dancing, a chorus line with top hats and waistcoats, a seated cancan, as well as a dance marked by the carrying of candles and by the use of other props.

Goodwin et al. (2004) conducted a study with five dancers with spina bifida. The participants, who were between the ages of six and 14 years old, were members of a wheelchair dance troupe. In this qualitative study, the aim was to understand the lived body experiences of the participants. The focus was on how the dancers spoke about their bodies, what their experiences were as dancers, and how their wheelchairs became an implement of dance. Four themes emerge from the data, with the first being unconditional acceptance. The studio was a safe space, where the dancers could feel at ease and could experience a sense of belonging. The second theme to emerge from the data relates to the sense of pride that the participants felt due to their accomplishments in dance. To the participants, it was "a dream come true" (p. 237), which enabled them to feel beautiful and graceful. The third theme focused on how participation in dance enabled the dancers to transcend their perceptions of the conventional role of the wheelchair, resulting in its meaning changing for them. It went from being a purely utilitarian instrument that allowed the participants to go from one place to another, to being a means through which the dancers could express themselves with movement, communicate their emotions, and tell a story. The wheelchair became "an outlet for emotional, creative, and physical freedom" (Goodwin, 2004, p. 6; Goodwin et al., 2004, p. 244). The fourth theme found in the data pertained to the observation of a physically and psychologically "stronger self". The younger dancers were given the opportunity to learn from the older dancers regarding other facets of living with physical limitations. Dance was a platform from which the

dancers could share their thoughts and fears. As such, it was said to be a normalising experience for the participants, by means of which they could relate to the other dancers. Physically, the dancers stated that they became aware of muscles of which they were previously unaware, and they learned to use their body, as well as the wheelchair, in new ways. Experiences of improved balance and a new-found independence in their physical management were reported. Due to the dance programme having been developed to suit the dancers' needs and requirements, they danced for the love of it, to experience happiness and joy through movement, and to remove their daily stresses.

Hampton's (2013) Ghana-based case study, with the intention of creating awareness surrounding the enjoyment of dancing and performing for hearing-impaired persons, explored teaching African dance to deaf students. The assumption was that this form of knowledge was unknown to hearing individuals. A second aim of the study was to provide empirical and pedagogical reference points for dance teachers and professionals, in terms of current trends and developments in the field of teaching hearing-impaired students. The intention therewith was to be empowered to remove preconceived fears around teaching children with disabilities. Thirdly, the idea was to show hearing-impaired individuals that they could experience just as much physical, emotional and spiritual fulfilment through dance as could hearing individuals. Lastly, the case study sought to illuminate the work being done by the Cape Coast School for the Deaf, as well as to increase opportunities for the school to make contact with individuals and organisations so as to help improve its facilities, and the experiences of the students and staff. Hampton (2013) considered the school to have a model programme that demonstrated a positive outcome from which developed nations could learn. The dance teacher stated that he believed that the deaf students could perform the dances better than did the dancers who were able to hear, as dance is a form of communication that suits the deaf and hearing-impaired dancers well. Through sign language, the dancers constantly communicated with their hands, with dance being an extension of this form of expression that allowed the dancers more of an opportunity to express their feelings than they might otherwise have had. This, in turn, helped to make them more comfortable about expressing themselves to others. Dance was also used as a means through which the hearing-impaired dancers could connect with the hearing dancers and teach them about the meanings and messages that were communicated through the Ghanaian cultural dances. In this way, dance was seen to enhance the social aspect of the participants' lives. Opportunities were also given to the hearing-impaired dancers to continue to dance once they had left the school, in order that

they might improve their skills, gain further experience, and earn an income, while performing for audiences who appreciate their efforts and expertise.

Two of the dissertations that have been written on the topic of disability and dance approached the research from a qualitative perspective. One of the studies aimed to determine children's perceptions of dance ability and disability in relation to an integrated dance programme. Michelle Zitomer (2011) included both children with physical disabilities (*n*=5) and children without disabilities (*n*=9) in her study. The participants were between the ages of six and nine years old. The results from the study showed that able-bodied participants' perceptions shifted from a "can't walk, can't dance" perspective to one that was "can't walk, can dance", due to the participants' involvement in the integrated dance programme. The perceptions of the competency of the children with disabilities also changed during the programme. The outcome of the study was the understanding that an integrated dance programme could have a positive effect on the perceptions of children regarding dance ability, and that it could have an impact on able-bodied children's perception of disability.

Margaret Quinlan (2009) conducted a study to explore "how discourses of difference sustain and disrupt the separation and marginalisation of individuals with disabilities from the world of art, specifically dance" (Abstract, p. iii). She conducted a case study of the Dancing Wheels Company and School – Art in Motion in Ohio, America. Dancing Wheels is a modern dance company that integrates stand-up and sit-down wheelchair dancers. Through her study, Quinlan (2009) argues that Dancing Wheels, as an organisation, "(re)inscribes dance and (dis)ability through dialogic, aesthetic, and narratively based communication, performances, and practices" (Abstract, p. iv).

Danielle Jay (1991) conducted a quantitative study in America regarding the effect that a dance programme had on the creativity of preschool children who were, as referred to in the report, "handicapped". The focus of this study was on children with speech and language delays who were between the ages of three and five years old. Besides the speech and language delays, the participants ranged in disability from "behaviourally disordered to mentally deficient" (p. 307). An experimental group of 12 participants attended a dance programme, while five participants, who formed the control group, were involved in an adapted physical education programme. The subscales included in the test instrument were imagination, fluency and originality. After the 12-week dance programme,

which was based on sensory experiences and which made use of Laban's effort action, the results that were achieved indicated that, while the children's imagination was significantly affected by the programme, their fluency and originality were relatively unaffected. However, the experimental group was found to have undergone a more significant improvement in terms of the set of subscales than did the control group.

3.3.2 Partnered dance

Cooper and Thomas (2002) focused on the elderly in their study. They drew their sample from people who were over 60 years old, focusing on the participants' experiences of social ballroom and modern sequence dance, which are two similar dance styles involving partnered dance. In ballroom dance, each couple interprets and expresses their dance movements differently to those of the surrounding couples, whereas modern sequence dance involves choreographed dance sequences that are performed alike by all couples. The older participant group appeared to prefer participating in modern sequence dance to participating in ballroom dance, because there was less chance of injury from bumping into the other couples on the dance floor with the former type of dance. The participants highlighted a number of benefits that they gained from taking part in social dance. Firstly, participation in dance can provide "continuity within change" (p. 689). The generation in question was raised in line with certain cultural experiences, codes and behaviours, and through social dance they can "continue to define itself in these ways without being challenged or ridiculed" (p. 690). Secondly, they were offered the chance to experience a second "teenagerhood" in accordance with which they could have fun after being able to let go of the burdens of family and jobs. Thirdly, the participants were provided with an enclosed social world in which they are not confined by age, but rather by the nature of the dance which enabled them to experience a sense of community. Fourthly, the representatives of the generation were given a chance to become visible and aesthetically pleasing to one another through their dress, mannerisms and dance style. Fifthly, the participants felt a sense of worth and achievement in the skills that they learned through their experiences in dance, and in using other skills that they no longer employed in their day-to-day life. Lastly, they gained an opportunity to experience having a fit body and mind attuned to dancing, which helped them to feel younger than their years. The form of dance in which the participants engaged helped them to ward off ailments associated with old age, including physical stiffness and mental deterioration (Cooper & Thomas, 2002).

Koval (2007), in describing her personal experiences of teaching ballroom dance to children, college students, and adults, states that she found that the children and adolescents were inspired by watching other children dance, and that they could appreciate the level of skill that it took to perform ballroom dance. The opportunity to partake in competitions and performances further encouraged the children to practise more and to work harder to improve their dance skills than they might otherwise have done. An improvement in the level of self-esteem of the dancers was observed when they experienced the excitement of performing for an audience or of participating in a competition, regardless of whether they won or not. The children reached a level of skill that was admired by people of all ages, and, as such, they felt a distinct sense of pleasure and joy. With regard to teaching adults ballroom dance, Koval (2007) noticed that the opportunity to participate in dance allowed the adult learners to socialise and to have fun while exercising. The positive skills learned could be generalised into other areas of life, and meaningful memories could be made through the development of ballroom dance skills. Koval (2007) states that “ballroom dance is a wonderful lifetime sport that can be enjoyed in many settings by people of all ages” (p. 6).

An uncontrolled pilot study was conducted by Marchant et al. (2010), in which they explored the effects of a short duration, high-dose contact improvisation dance workshop for people with Parkinson’s disease. The researchers sought to determine the feasibility of, and the possible benefits that could come from, contact improvisation (a form of partnered dance) as an exercise intervention for the population concerned. The workshop activities, which progressed in level of difficulty, focused on balance strategies, weight-sharing, fall management, and spatial awareness, which are all specific to Parkinson’s disease exercise programmes. The sample consisted of 11 people with Parkinson’s disease, who attended a workshop of 10 dance classes over a period of two weeks. Disease severity, balance, functional mobility, and gait were measured one week before and after the workshop. The results showed that the participants improved on a rating scale with a motor subscale and balance score. They also showed an increased swing and decreased stance percentage during walking, as well as an increase in their backward step length. High levels of enjoyment were expressed by the participants, and they showed an interest in continuing with the contact improvisation classes on completion of the study.

3.4 Visual impairment and dance

Two studies seem appropriate to discuss here, with the first being a study that was conducted by Larsson and Frändin (2006). The focus of the researchers was on “the effect of body awareness exercises and dance-based training on balance and gait speed in individuals of working age with acquired blindness” (p. 25). The eight participants, who were between the ages of 30 and 62 years old, had acquired blindness. The variables in the study were one-leg stance, functional reach, maximum step length, timed up and go, a 10-metre walk test (including self-selected and maximum gait speed) and an activity scale. The intervention consisted of 13 weeks of body awareness exercises and dance-based training. This purely quantitative study did not take the participants’ emotional state or personal accounts of experience into consideration. The results showed that the body awareness exercises and the dance-based training could have an effect on one-leg stance, functional reach, maximum step length, timed up and go, and gait speed. The activity scale was used as a control measure for factors related to training effects caused by physical activities outside the intervention programme. From the activity scale, it could be determined that the level of physical activity did not increase during the study, which suggests that the changes that were seen in the participants were a direct result of the intervention.

The second study in the field of visual impairment and dance that relates to the current study is that of Paxton et al. (1993). In the early 1970s, Steve Paxton (a dancer and choreographer) developed the form of dance known as contact improvisation. This form of dance involves two bodies moving in constant physical contact with each other, with both dancers being equally responsible for the movement created. Such movement opposes the traditional idea of partnered dance, such as ballroom dance, which is that of the existence of a leader/follower dynamic between the two partners. In 1986, Paxton and Kilcoyne began their research into the benefits of contact improvisation for visually impaired individuals. Together they developed a movement-based training/workshop programme that was theoretically underpinned by the group dynamics model, which was also developed by the same researchers. Of interest in their research study is their inclusion of visually impaired dancers along with their sighted partners. Accordingly, it can be seen that they recognised the importance of including both sighted and sight-limited dance partners in their training workshops. However, the purpose of their article was to “describe the principles and methods underlying an integrated training in extended

movement and mobility for visually impaired people and the sighted (and unsighted) who work with them" (Paxton et al., 1993, p. 3). However, they did not delve further, and give insight into the experiences of both dance partners, but instead described the physicality involved in each movement of contact improvisation, as well as the training programme that they offered.

3.5 Conclusion

In this literature review, I have shown that the majority of studies in the field of visual impairment and physical activity have focused primarily on children, adolescents and the elderly, whereas the research focused on dance and disability has primarily been undertaken in the area of wheelchair dance, and in terms of more individualistic forms of dance. Although many useful studies have been conducted surrounding the topic of disability and dance, which have allowed for improvements to be made, a significant gap has been left regarding the undertaking of qualitative studies with young adults. A similar situation seems to prevail in regards to studies specifically on visual impairment and dance. The lived experience of people with visual impairments has, so far, tended to be overlooked, which could result in the further oppression of such people as meaning-makers and experts in their own lives. The perceptions of visually impaired dancers play a vital role in their experiences and, therefore, deserve to take centre stage in ongoing research studies. The experiences and perceptions of such dancers' sighted partners further add to our understanding of the phenomenon of inclusive dance as they experience the dance form with their partner.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to give a voice to the experiences of visually impaired university students, and their sighted partners, who participate in inclusive social ballroom dance, in order to gain a better understanding of their lived experience.

The following four research questions guided this study:

1) What is the lived experience of university students with visual impairments who participate in social ballroom dance classes with other sighted students?
2) What is the lived experience of sighted university students who partner visually impaired students in social ballroom dance?
3) How do visually impaired university students describe the effects of participation in inclusive social ballroom dance on their life?
4) How do sighted university students describe the experience of partnering a visually impaired dancer, and the impact of this experience on their life?

In this chapter, I outline the research design and the methodology used in this study. Following this, I give a detailed description of the participants, including how they were recruited, and the inclusion criteria used. Next, I give a detailed account of the data collection and the analysis technique used. The chapter concludes with a discussion of issues pertaining to validity, reflexivity and ethical considerations in this research.

4.2 Research design

This study was qualitative in nature and was conducted following the principles of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). I made use of semi-structured, in-depth interviews (see Appendix A: Interview schedule) in order to collect my data. IPA offers a theoretical framework in which to conduct a study, and proposes guidelines for use of the methodology. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) describe IPA as “a qualitative research approach committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences” (p. 1).

IPA can be understood in terms of its main theoretical foundations: phenomenology; hermeneutics and idiography. According to Smith et al. (2009), phenomenology is “a philosophical approach to the study of experience” (p. 11). They go further to state that phenomenologists tend to share an interest in considering what the experience of being human is like. They focus on the things that are important to the individual and that constitute their lived world. Lawthom and Tindell (2011) as well as Smith and Eatough (2007), discuss the concept of phenomenology within the ambit of research. They maintain that phenomenology supports subjectivity, which considers how individuals interpret and structure the world around them. They position this approach with a focus on sense-making in which the world of the individual is comprised of personal meanings. Smith et al. (2009) state that psychologists view phenomenological philosophy as a means through which they are provided with “a rich source of ideas about how to examine and comprehend lived experience” (p. 11). Ultimately, phenomenology is personal to the individual. It seeks to discover the relationship between the individual and the world or others, and it disputes the idea that people can be viewed in isolation. Giorgi (2011) offers a critique of IPA as a valid qualitative approach to research.

The second theoretical foundation of IPA is that of hermeneutics, the theory of interpretation (see Tomkins & Eatough, 2010; Wagstaff & Williams, 2014). Smith et al. (2009) state that hermeneutic theorists focus on the methods and purposes of interpretation. Theorists ask whether it is possible to reveal the actual intentions or meanings of an author, and they postulate the relationship between the context of a text’s historical production and the context of a text’s current relevance and interpretation. In an IPA-related study, the researcher who interprets the discourse of the participant is able to give a perspective on the text of which the participant might not even be aware. This highlights the complexity of the relationship existing between the researcher and the participant. According to Smith et al. (2009), the interpretive process is multifaceted and dynamic. The researcher in such a study has to be aware continuously of the effects of a double hermeneutic. This refers to the researcher making sense of the participant, while the participant, in turn, makes sense of their own experiences. This highlights the dual role of the researcher who, on the one hand, is similar to the participant in that they are using their human resources to make sense of the world, while, on the other hand, remaining distinct from the participant, so they can only access the participant’s experiences through

the participant's personal reports. In this way, the researcher makes use of their experientially-informed perspective (Smith et al., 2009).

Bracketing is another concept within hermeneutics that is addressed in the study (see Snelgrove, 2014). This concept postulates that, although no researcher approaches their study with a clean slate, the researcher's perspectives, biases and thoughts cannot unduly influence the meaning-making of the participants. It is, therefore, necessary for the researcher to bracket their preconceptions, so as to allow the truth of the participant's story to come to the fore (Smith et al., 2009). This concept is discussed in more detail in section 4.6 (The researcher and issues of reflexivity).

The hermeneutic circle is a further process that was constantly borne in mind in the current study (Snelgrove, 2014). The process relates to the circular manner in which the different parts relate to the whole, and in which the whole relates to its parts (Tomkins & Eatough, 2010). In terms of the present study, if the "whole" is understood to be the research project in its entirety, then the "parts" are the individual interviews with the visually impaired and the sighted dancers. However, if I describe the "whole" as being the interview itself, the "parts" would be singular extracts from the transcribed text. The hermeneutic circle, which is said to describe a variety of relationships, is a crucial element in the method of interpretation (Smith et al., 2009).

Idiography is the last of the concepts that forms the theoretical foundation of IPA. The emphasis of this concept is on the particular (Larkin & Thompson, 2012; Snelgrove, 2014). Psychological research is usually concerned with uncovering claims at the level of the population; however, idiography contrasts such a "nomothetic" idea by focusing on the particular on two levels (Smith & Eatough, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). The first level consists of the detail, which refers to the depth of analysis. A thorough and systematic analysis of the data must be performed. The second level of idiography explores how a particular phenomenon (i.e. an event, a process, or a relationship) has been understood in a particular context from the perspective of a particular individual (Smith & Eatough, 2007). It is for this reason that purposive selective sampling is used (Houston & Mullan-Jensen, 2012). Single case studies are commonly used for purposes of analysis from an idiographic perspective. Once several case studies have been completed, generalisations can begin to take shape (Smith et al., 2009). The participant interviews in the current study

were analysed separately, so that comparisons could then be drawn from the visually impaired and the sighted data sets obtained.

4.3 Sample

This section offers an explanation of the recruitment process used for the sample, followed by a description of the sample size, and of the inclusion criteria, as well as of the participants.

4.3.1 Sample size

A fairly small, select sample was required for this study, as I aimed to obtain rich data and a thick description by means of using protracted interviews. The population of the Differently-abled Class consisted of 12 dancers, of whom six were visually impaired and six were sighted. Due to the limited population of interest, there was only a small pool of potential participants. I, therefore, used purposive sampling techniques in order to establish my sample. According to Smith et al. (2009), purposive sampling is often used in qualitative research studies because it offers insight into a particular experience or phenomenon. The sample is specifically selected based on its capacity to offer the researcher access to a particular perspective on the topic or phenomenon in question. In other words, the sample is chosen to represent a perspective rather than a population, and it is for this reason that only a small sample is required.

Initially, my sample was to be made up of five visually impaired dancers and of five of their sighted partners, who all attended a Western Cape university. The first step that I took in conducting my research was to gain institutional permission to conduct a study with students at the university. I then contacted the dance instructor, who referred me to the chairperson of the dance society. The chairperson provided me with a list of the visually impaired dancers who attended their Differently-abled Class.

On 23 September 2013, I contacted five potential participants via email, with no response (see Appendix B: Invitation to participate). I then visited the Differently-abled Dance Class on 1 October 2013, where I spoke to eight dancers (five visually impaired, and three sighted, dancers), who verbally agreed to participate in the study. We exchanged email addresses with the view to arranging a time to meet at the university for their Interview. On

3 October 2013, I sent a second email to all the dancers who had initially agreed to participate in the study. One sighted dancer responded to my email, and we organised a suitable time for the interview. Over the next few weeks, and after weekly emails to the participants, I conducted four interviews. One visually impaired participant withdrew from the study, and two sighted dancers did not respond to my weekly emails. As the interviews were being conducted around the same time as the participants' exams, their time was limited, which made it relatively difficult to find a suitable time to meet. By December 2013, I had conducted five interviews with two sighted and three unsighted participants.

In March 2014, after the start of the university's first semester, I resumed recruiting participants for my study. Because it was a new year, there were new dancers in the class as well as some of the dancers who had been there in the previous year. Some dancers had left the class due to academic and other commitments, while others had left the university on the completion of their studies.

On 25 March 2014, I visited the Differently-abled Class. Although three couples had signed up for the dance classes, only two couples were present on the night in question. Each couple consisted of one visually impaired dancer and of one sighted dancer. I had previously interviewed two of the visually impaired dancers, and one of the sighted dancers. On that night, two sighted partners present agreed to partake in the study.

After another visit to the Differently-abled Class on 8 April 2014, in addition to weekly emails, the two above-mentioned sighted dancers became available for their interviews. I could not manage to arrange a suitable time to meet with the third visually impaired dancer, who formed part of the 2013 group of participants whom I had contacted at an earlier stage. A few weeks into the first semester, she left the dance class to focus on her studies, so she was unavailable to sit for an interview. One new visually impaired dancer and one sighted dancer joined the class. Both verbally agreed to participate in the study and, once again after weekly emails, were able to commit to a time for their interview. In the end, I interviewed four visually impaired dancers and five of their sighted partners, bringing the total sample to nine participants.

4.3.2 Inclusion criteria

The participants in the current study were selected based on the following inclusion criteria:

- At the time of their interview, they were enrolled as a student at the university where the study was being conducted.
- They were attending inclusive social ballroom dance classes at the same university.
- They were placed in either the visually impaired or the sighted group, based on their personally reported visual abilities.
- They were able to converse in English.

The application of the above criteria allowed for the analysis of differing perspectives surrounding their experiences of inclusive social ballroom dance. The term “inclusive” refers to a dance partnership consisting of a visually impaired dancer and a sighted partner.

Each participant was approached directly by myself (i.e. the researcher). The purpose of the study and the nature of the involvement of the participants were explained in detail, and they were asked whether they would be willing to participate in the study. Once I had gained consent from each of the participants, as well as from the university where the study was being conducted, I began the data collection process.

4.3.3 Participants

The sample for this study consisted of nine participants, who were split into two participant groups, the visually impaired group and the sighted group. As mentioned in section 4.3.1, the visually impaired group contained four participants, and there were five participants in the sighted group. In terms of racial profiling, the sample group was racially representative, consisting of white, coloured and African participants. However, I have not noted the race of the participants in order to maintain the principle of anonymity, and because I felt that such grouping had no bearing on the outcomes or findings of this study. With regard to their home language, five of the participants were Afrikaans-speaking, three were English-speaking, and one participant did not disclose his home language. The participants’ home language had no impact on the findings of this study. Table 4.1 below reflects the

demographic details of all nine participants, which are discussed in greater detail in subsections 4.3.3.1 and 4.3.3.2 below.

Table 4.1

Demographics of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Sighted / Visually impaired (VI)	Length of time in the Differently-abled Class*
Sarah	25	F	Sighted	1 month
Jessica	22	F	VI	2 years
Richard	23	M	VI	3 years
Rachel	29	F	VI	2 years
Shaun	21	M	Sighted	2 years
James	25	M	Sighted	2 years
Peter	33	M	Sighted	2 years
Matthew	20	M	Sighted	3 months
Stephanie	18	F	VI - Partially sighted	1 month

*Length of time in the Differently-abled Class, at the time of interview

Each participant in the current study was assigned a unique identifier in the form of a pseudonym, so as to uphold the ethical principles of anonymity and confidentiality.

4.3.3.1 Visually impaired participants

The visually impaired group consisted of three female participants and one male participant (see Table 4.1 above), who ranged in age from 18 to 29 years old. At the time of their interview, one participant was 18 years old, with the next in order of age being 22 years old, followed by one who was 23 years old, and the oldest in the group was 29 years old. Three of the participants were considered to be totally blind, and one participant was partially sighted. At the time of their interview, one participant had been dancing in the

Differently-abled Class for three years, whereas two of the participants had been dancing for two years, and one participant had been dancing for only one month.

Table 4.2

Nature of impairment of the visually impaired participants

Participant	Genetic predisposition	Degenerative disorder	Age when impairment began to affect daily life	Range of visibility	Assistive devices (ADs) used
Jessica	Yes	Yes	Born sighted. Learned Braille at 12 years old, with rapid degeneration of sight in Grade 12 and in first year of university.	Can distinguish between light and dark. Cannot see detail. Cannot visually follow movement in front of her.	Guide dog / cane
Richard	Yes	Yes	Born blind, eye sight significantly improved around 6 years old, with rapid degeneration again at 10 years old.	Has light perception, and can identify the placement of large objects.	Guide dog / cane
Rachel	Yes	Yes	Born partially sighted, with degeneration since 2006.	Can distinguish between light and dark, “and a bit more”. Can see television is switched on.	Guide dog
Stephanie	No	Yes	Onset and diagnosis at 15 years old, with rapid degeneration at 17 years old that required emergency surgery.	Vision 60% in left eye, 100% in right eye. Can see shapes and colours. Can't see writing on board. No depth perception.	Learning ADs: laptop with Transformer camera, audio recorder to record lectures, Kindle with read-aloud feature

The three unsighted participants used guide dogs, and two of the participants made use of a cane to assist them on a daily basis (see Table 4.2 above). Three of the participants stated that their impairment was genetic, while the fourth participant said that the onset of her impairment was based on “the luck of the draw”. They all confirmed that their impairment was degenerative, and that they could identify a time in their life when it began to have a significant impact on their daily life.

The participants’ impairments differed slightly in terms of their visual field. The male participant, Richard, had the most severe impairment of the three participants (as reported by another participant); however, he was able to distinguish between shades of light and dark, as well as being able to identify the placement of large objects in a room, at times, although he mostly made use of echo location (i.e. sound bouncing off the walls) to establish where he was in terms of spatial surrounds. As well as being able to distinguish between light and dark, Jessica could also determine where the light source was. Rachel was able to determine light from dark, and, as well as being able to see that the television was switched on, could also see “a little bit more”. However, she did not clarify of what the “little bit more” consisted.

The partially sighted participant, Stephanie, reported having 60% visibility in her left eye, and having, officially, 100% vision in her right eye, when using contact lenses. However, due to the severe discrepancy between the vision in her two eyes, her right eye tended to overcompensate for the left eye, as the former was, in effect, trying to see for both eyes. The overcompensation placed a considerable amount of strain on her right eye, which effectively reduced her visual field. Consequently, she was unable to see anything at a distance, and had no depth perception. She could make out colours and outlines, and, at times, she could see where certain facial features should be, for example. However, she could not read small print or writing on the boards in the lecture rooms. She was not in need of a guide dog, although she used devices to assist her with her studies and during lectures. In the lecture hall, she made use of a laptop with a Transformer camera in order to see what was written on the board. The Transformer camera captured images and a live feed from the board, which she could see and save on her laptop. The device zoomed in and enlarged the images for her, as her eyes were unable to adjust in that way. She also used a Kindle reader with a read-along feature for her textbooks, because her eyesight deteriorated throughout the day, which hindered her ability to study in the afternoons and evenings. The Kindle read her study material to her so that she could continue to learn

using her auditory sense. Because she was unable to drive due to her reduced eyesight, she found it convenient to live on campus, where she was able to make her way around on foot.

In the Differently-abled Class in the current study, each visually impaired participant was partnered with a member of the dance committee, who usually had more dance experience and were on a higher skill level than were the differently abled dancers who joined the class. The participants reported that the dance instructor personally chose a partner for them whom she felt would be able to work best with the differently abled dancer in question. The differently abled dancers were given the opportunity to participate in the intervarsity competition, as well as in other competitions that were held throughout the year. At the time of the interviews, their class was being held once a week for an hour.

Before moving on to the dancers' experiences in the Differently-abled Class, it is necessary to state their dance experience outside of the dance society. Table 4.3 below consists of a summary of: the visually impaired dancers' previous dance experience; their current dance experience outside of the dance society; an explanation of how they were introduced to the Differently-abled Class; and, lastly, the dance styles that they would still like to learn in future.

Table 4.3

Summary of visually impaired dancers' previous, current and future dance experience

Participant	Previous dance experience	Current dance experience outside the dance society	Introduction to the Differently-abled Dance Class	Dance styles participant would still like to learn
Jessica	No formal dance experience. Sokkie, free (loose) dancing with friends.	Hip hop workshop through society. Sokkie workshop through society. Basic salsa.	Attended a dance society demonstration with a friend. Signed up for the class after speaking directly to society members at the demonstration.	Hip hop, salsa, Western swing, jazz, line dancing, Spanish dancing, Irish dancing, modern dancing, ballet (although she believes that ballet is challenging, *"It's a bit hectic. It's a bit difficult"*), African dances, dancing of any kind.
Richard	No formal dance experience.	Did not state.	Joined dance society after attending their opening function and after being told that they were looking for differently abled dancers.	Irish dancing, waltz, polka.
Rachel	No formal dance experience.	None.	Was told about the class from a friend who had studied at the university before her. She then emailed her sports manager to ask for details of the dance class.	Hip hop, line dancing, all forms of dance. She would like to broaden her knowledge of dance, and to come to know more about each style. When people discuss a certain dance style, she wants to know to what they are referring.

Stephanie	Started dancing at 4 years old. Modern dancing, ballet, contemporary dance, jazz, hip hop, ballroom dancing.	She found a ballet studio near the university, and was in the process of deciding whether it would be a good time to join.	During a conversation in the Braille room, Jessica told her about the dance society and about the Differently-abled Dance Class.	Rhythmic gymnastics, tap.

From Table 4.3, it is clear that Stephanie is the only dancer with previous formal dance experience. The other three dancers might have engaged in casual, social styles of dance typically performed at events and functions, such as sokkie, langarm, or free dancing with friends. However, they had not attended dance classes before joining the Differently-abled Class.

Jessica attended workshops in hip hop and sokkie through the dance society, in addition to attending some salsa classes outside of the dance society. She was determined to continue to attend workshops whenever she was able to do so. At the time of her interview, Stephanie was deciding on whether it was a good time for her to begin ballet classes again. Her aim was to return to being on pointe, but she felt that she needed to build up to it. Neither Rachel nor Richard attended any other dance classes.

The visually impaired dancers were introduced to the Differently-abled Class at varying times, and in different ways. Jessica had attended a demonstration performed by dance society members. Later, she had made enquiries, together with a friend, as to the details of the dance class. Along with a friend, Richard had attended the dance society's opening function, where he was told that they were looking for differently abled dancers. He decided, at that point, to join the society. Rachel had heard about the dance society through a friend who had studied at the university a few years ahead of her. When she became a student at the university, she had enquired about the dance classes with her sports manager. Stephanie, being a few years younger than the other dancers, met Jessica when they were both making use of the Braille room. Jessica had told her about all of the societies on campus, including the dance society. As Stephanie had always had a passion for dance, she decided to join the society.

The last column in Table 4.3 contains a list of the dance styles that the participants would still like to experience, if they were given the opportunity to do so. Jessica stated that she

would like to learn all forms of dance, but specifically mentioned hip hop, salsa, Western swing, jazz, line dancing, Spanish dancing, Irish dancing, modern dancing, ballet, African dances, and any other form of dance about which she heard. With regard to ballet, Jessica was in two minds as to whether she would actually like to try it. She stated, *"It's a bit hectic. It's a bit difficult."* Richard would have liked to experience Irish dancing, the waltz, and the polka. He stated that the latter two dance forms dated back to the nineteenth century, and are uncommon nowadays. Rachel explained that she would like to learn all the different styles of dance available, in order to broaden her dance knowledge. Learning them would also give her a reference frame when people spoke of the different dance forms. She specifically mentioned hip hop and line dancing, although she felt that she might not enjoy them as much as she did ballroom dance, as, in her understanding, they were less structured forms of dance. She stated that she preferred the choreographed, structured dance styles, and that she felt that her favourites would remain ballroom and Latin American dance. As Stephanie already has experience in many different styles of dance, she mentioned rhythmic gymnastics and tap as being on her to-do list.

4.3.3.2 Sighted participants

According to Table 4.1 above, the sighted group contained one female participant and four male participants. The participants were between the ages of 20 and 33 years old. At the time of the interviews, one participant was 20 years old, one was 21 years old, two were 25 years old, and one was 33 years old. The sighted participants did not declare any form of impairment.

Sarah had danced with a visually impaired partner for one month at the time of her interview, whereas Shaun and Peter had been with their partners for two years. Matthew had been partnering a visually impaired dancer for three months, and although James stated in his interview that he had been with his visually impaired partner for three years, after cross-referencing, it was found that he had, in actual fact, been with her for only two years.

The sighted dancers in the Differently-abled Class were, typically, committee members who had a few years' experience with ballroom and Latin American dance. The aforementioned participants were on a more advanced level than were the visually impaired dancers, which made it easier for the sighted dancers to be able to assist the

dance instructor to teach the visually impaired participants how to dance. The visually impaired dancers reportedly required more individualistic attention and instruction in order to learn the dance steps and moves than did sighted dancers. The sighted dance partners were, therefore, an instrumental part of this dynamic instructional process. In order to gain a clearer picture of the sighted participants' dance experience, Table 4.4 below describes their previous dance experience, their current dance experience outside of the dance society, their introduction to the dance society, and the dance styles they would still like to try.

Table 4.4

Summary of sighted dancers' previous, current and future dance experience

Participant	Previous dance experience	Current dance experience outside the dance society	Introduction to the Differently-abled Class	Dance styles participant would still like to learn
Sarah	Modern dance in primary school, ballroom and Latin American inconsistently since high school. Workshops in line dancing and hip hop.	None.	Through the dance committee.	Preferred ballroom and Latin American dance. Appreciated all forms of dance.
Shaun	None.	Dance styles such as ballroom, kwaito, and contemporary performed in casual social settings. No formal classes attended outside of the dance society.	Through the dance committee.	Individual dance styles, such as contemporary and ballet.
James	Hip hop and freestyle. No formal classes attended.	He started a hip hop crew, as no classes were offered in the area.	He attended a demonstration performed by the Differently-abled Class.	His sole focus was on ballroom and Latin American dance. Once he had mastered such styles, he stated that he would consider doing other forms of dance, such as tap dance.
Peter	None.	None.	Through the dance committee.	His focus was on ballroom and Latin American dance. However, he stated that he would like to experience salsa dance outside of the dance society.

Matthew	He competed in a Fred Astaire competition in Matric, in ballroom and Latin American dance.	None, unless he is performing at a function or event with the dance society.	Through the dance committee.	He was content doing just ballroom and Latin American dance.

Of the sighted dancers, neither Shaun nor Peter had had any dance experience prior to joining the dance society (see Table 4.4 above). Sarah had attended classes in modern dance, as well as in ballroom and Latin American dance. Although James had primarily performed hip hop and freestyle dance, he had not attended any formal classes in the past. Matthew had competed in a ballroom and Latin American dance competition in high school without having done much formal training at the time.

At the time of the interviews, three of the dancers were not engaging in any form of dance outside of the dance society, while Shaun stated that he enjoyed dancing in casual social settings, such as nightclubs. Due to James' love for hip hop, he had started a hip hop dance crew in the area, which was not affiliated with the dance society at the time of the interview.

Four of the sighted dancers stated that they were introduced to the Differently-abled Class through their commitment to the dance committee. Members of the dance committee had to be present at all of the dance classes in order to support and to assist the dance instructor. James reported that he became aware of the Differently-abled Class when he attended one of their performances.

Most of the sighted participants stated their commitment to ballroom and Latin American dance, to the exclusion of other dance forms. However, Shaun expressed a desire to learn such individual forms of dance as ballet and contemporary dance. In contrast, Peter stated that he would like to become more proficient in salsa dancing, so that he could dance with his friends at salsa dance clubs.

4.4 Data collection

The data were collected in accordance with the guidelines proposed by Smith et al. (2009). I interviewed the participants individually, in a private office at the university. The interviews took between one and two hours each to conduct. The visually impaired participant interviews lasted longer than did those with the sighted participants. The interviews with the visually impaired participants lasted an average of two hours, while those with the sighted participants lasted an average of one hour and fifteen minutes. The interviews took place between October 2013 and May 2014.

The process of transcription was performed between October 2013 and July 2014. I transcribed each of the interviews myself. With consent from the participants, audio recording devices were used in order to assist the transcription process. I made use of a Samsung Galaxy S3 voice recorder, as well as of a Lenovo G500 laptop sound recorder.

The interviews were semi-structured in nature, in order to give the participants the freedom to be able to elaborate on matters that were significant to them. The interviews were loosely guided by means of the use of an interview schedule consisting mostly of open questions that led the participants in the direction of the topics that were of interest to the researcher (see Appendix A: Interview schedule). However, the participant as the meaning-maker in their own life and experiences also guided the interview. Smith et al. (2009), state that semi-structured interviews are commonly used in IPA-driven studies, and that the interview schedule tends to be flexible, as the participant “has an important stake in what is covered” (p. 4).

4.5 Data analysis

Once all nine of the interviews had been transcribed, I began the process of analysis. The purpose of the analytic process was to draw up a concise narrative account of the participants’ experiences. Themes were drawn from the data, and evidence was given in the form of extracts so as to substantiate the interpretations made, as well as to enable the reader to come to their own conclusions as to whether they agree with the analysis. Each theme is described and discussed individually in Chapters Five and Six. The similarities and differences among the members of the visually impaired group are described in Chapter Five. The same has been done for the sighted participant group in Chapter Six.

Although similarities and differences were found between the two groups, the focus was on providing a narrative account of the participants' experiences, using their personal report as a foundation for the account. Each participant was assigned a unique identifier that was used throughout the research report in order to avoid a breach of confidentiality.

For this study, I decided to perform data analysis by means of the methodology proposed by Smith et al. (2009), as it would then be a continuation of my theoretical framework and research design within the field of IPA. Braun and Clarke (2006) describe IPA as being theoretically bounded, while IPA researchers search for patterns in qualitative data. Smith et al. (2009) state that the existing literature on IPA does not prescribe a single method of data analysis. Rather, analysis is seen as a combined product of the participants and the researcher working together. While the focus of the current study was on the participants' lived experience of dance and on the meaning that the participants made of that experience, my account was driven by how I thought the participant was thinking. Such an understanding was connected to the concept of the double hermeneutic, as described in section 4.2. Smith et al. (2009) highlight the tentative and subjective nature of the truth claims of IPA analysis; however, they state that the subjectivity involved is "dialogical, systematic and rigorous in its application and the results of it are available for the reader to check subsequently" (p. 80). It must also be noted that, although they propose a step-by-step guide to IPA analysis, the dynamic process is multidirectional rather than unidirectional, and it is only fixed during the writing up and reporting of the analytic process concerned. As the steps proposed by Smith et al. (2009) approach the analysis in this way, I performed steps one through to five for each case before taking the sixth, and final, step. Once this was complete, I could consider the similarities and differences existing between the different data sets. The steps proposed by Smith et al. (2009) are given below, as they were followed in the current study.

4.5.1 Step 1: Reading and rereading

During the first step in the analytic process, I repeatedly read the written transcripts from the interviews that I had conducted with the participants in order to immerse myself in the data so as to allow the participants to become my focus. Within this process, as well as during the transcription process, I recorded my initial observations in a separate document, so I could bracket them while I became more familiar with the data. By means of reading and rereading the transcripts, I actively engaged with the data in order to begin the

process of gaining entry into the phenomenological world of the participant (Smith et al., 2009).

4.5.2 Step 2: Initial noting

According to Smith et al. (2009), this is the “most detailed and time consuming” (p. 83) level of analysis. In practice, there is an overlap between steps one and two as the researcher becomes more familiar with the ways in which the participant speaks, understands and thinks about their own life experiences. I began writing more detailed notes and comments in order to generate a comprehensive and detailed account of the data. Through the drafting of these initial notes, Smith et al. (2009) state that a descriptive core of comments is likely to emerge that focus on and stay true to the participants’ explicit meaning that is derived from their phenomenological experience. This might describe matters of importance to the participants, and the meanings that they ascribe to them. The process of interpretative noting which begins in this step, assists the researcher to understand how and why certain issues are of particular significance to the participants.

4.5.3 Step 3: Developing emergent themes

During step 3 of the analytic process, the aim is to identify and develop themes that have emerged from steps 1 and 2. The original transcript and my initial notes together formed the data set for each interview or participant concerned. The data sets were then used in developing the themes. While the data collection process was primarily participant-oriented or participant-led, it was during this stage that I began to interpret the narrative told by the participant (Smith et al., 2009).

4.5.4 Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

Once the themes had been developed, the next part of the process involved charting, or mapping into clusters, the themes that fitted together. Making use of such processes as abstraction, subsumption, polarisation, contextualisation, numeration, and function, I could determine superordinate themes and their subsequent subthemes, as well as find similarities and differences within the participants’ accounts. The context within which a theme emerges as well as its frequency and function are noteworthy, and they might have

far-reaching consequences for the analysis of the data. The outcome of this step was to organise and produce a structure that highlighted the most important and interesting elements of the participants' lived experience (Smith et al., 2009).

4.5.5 Step 5: Moving onto the next case

On completion of steps 1 through 4 of the analysis undertaken for the first participant, I went on to dealing with the data from the second participant, in relation to which I repeated the process. I followed this procedure until I had completed the process for all nine participants. It was important during this process to bracket the ideas and information from one participant when moving onto the next data set. The individuality of each participant needed to be upheld and respected throughout the analytic process, which was in line with IPA's idiographic commitment (Smith et al., 2009).

4.5.6 Step 6: Looking for patterns across the cases

The sixth, and final, step of the analytic process consists of identifying any patterns that have emerged across the cases, with any one case being one participant's account as recorded in the transcript. At this point, I focused on drawing common themes from the data, and on finding similarities and differences between the visually impaired and the sighted participant data sets, before writing up my findings using extracts from the transcripts to present a meaningful and in-depth analysis. The extracts, which form a large part of the findings chapters, reflect the voice of the participants, so as to ensure the transparency of the interpretations that I make (Smith et al., 2009).

4.6 The researcher and issues of reflexivity

I am a 33-year-old sighted woman, with no previous experience of disability studies. I have, however, experienced many different forms of dance, including having limited experience with ballroom and Latin American dance, and I have some understanding of the complexities of partnered dance. I am a student at Stellenbosch University, through which I am completing my thesis in fulfilment of my Master's degree in Psychology. In terms of this study, I completed the interviews and the transcriptions myself, with the support and guidance of my supervisor. He is a lecturer at Stellenbosch University, with experience in disability studies. This study has been co-supervised by Professor Liz

Bressan, the Director for the Centre for Human Performance Sciences based at Stellenbosch University.

In a qualitative research study, reflexivity is a crucial element that must be considered at all times. Banister (2011) describes reflexivity as a process involving “both thinking about oneself and thinking about one’s research” (p. 200). By means of engaging in such a process, the researcher can realise their own biases, interests, predilections, values, experiences and characteristics that affect the research, as well as the interpretations made (Banister, 2011).

During the process of this study, I realised that I had only a limited understanding of the defined differences between the social effect on the concept of disability, and the physical nature of an impairment. As a result of conducting my research, I have gained a deeper understanding of both concepts. I have also become more aware of my preconceptions that all visually impaired individuals would want the opportunity to participate in inclusive social ballroom dance, as, by means of such participation, they would be able to experience their body in a new way. I also had the misconception that all such people might be sensitive about the labels assigned to them by society. I could not comprehend how a visually impaired person could learn to dance, as I had no experience of them doing so. As a means of reflexivity, I discussed these issues with my supervisor in the broad context of my research study. Once I was aware of my own biases and preconceptions, I was able to write them down and bracket them, in order that I might avoid negative consequences for my research (see section 8.3 below for a more detailed account of reflexivity).

Bracketing, as has been mentioned in section 4.2, is another process that helps to prevent the researcher’s preconceptions and biases from having any effect on the meaning-making of the participant, while recognising that the researcher, too, approaches the study with their own history of experience (Smith et al., 2009). In order to bracket my preconceptions and the ideas brought about through data collection, I made a note of these issues throughout the research process, which I revisited during the different stages of the analysis. This allowed me to recognise which concepts were of importance to me, and which were significant to the participants.

4.7 Trustworthiness

In order to ensure the trustworthiness and quality of the study, I followed Yardley's (2000) guidelines. Trustworthiness was further monitored by means of supervision. Throughout the study, I aimed to demonstrate my commitment to the study by remaining sensitive to the context of the study, the material provided by the participants, the existing literature on the topic, and the socio-cultural milieu in which the study was situated. I remained committed and attentive to the comfort of the participants throughout the data collection and the analytic processes.

In terms of rigour, the thoroughness of the study, the quality of the interviews, and the completeness of the analysis were supervised on a continual basis (Yardley, 2000). Investigator triangulation was used as a further demonstration of commitment to the trustworthiness and rigour of the interpretations made and to the process of data analysis in its entirety (Long & Johnson, 2000; Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Barbour (2001) states that the aim of qualitative research is to "reflect the diversity within a given population" (p. 1115). Subsequently, my sample was purposively selected in order for me to be able to address the research questions appropriately, which upholds the principles of rigour in qualitative research.

During the writing up of the study, my aim was to create clear, detailed descriptions and explanations of my methods of data collection and data analysis, so as to ensure transparency and coherence in the presentation of the research. The transparency of the data analysis process was demonstrated through the inclusion of extracts from the data in the reporting of the Findings Chapters (see Chapters Five and Six). The final report was audited by my supervisor and co-supervisor, so as to further ensure the trustworthiness of the study.

4.8 Ethical considerations

This study was granted ethical approval by Stellenbosch University's Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities; reference number: HS940/2013). In order to conform with the Code of Ethics concerned, informed consent (see Appendix C) was obtained in writing from all of the research participants involved, as well as from the university at which the study was conducted. Confidentiality and anonymity were also

ensured, as the research participants' names and personal information, as well as the name of their university, is nowhere included in the research report. The participants were assigned unique identifiers in the form of pseudonyms so as to uphold the principle of anonymity. Protecting the participants' identity and confidentiality served to uphold the ethical principle of respect for their dignity. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time (Terre Blanche et al., 2006).

The research participants were required to partake in an audiotaped interview. The interviews were held in a private setting to put the participants at their ease so they might feel safe in regard to disclosing their personal stories and experiences. Every care was taken to ensure that no harm befell the research participants as a direct or indirect consequence of the research (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). They were provided with a list of professionals who were able to support the participants should any issue arise due to the nature of their participation in the study (see Appendix D: Participant support services).

All of the material that was obtained during the research study, especially that relating to the participants (in the form of audiotapes and transcribed interviews, among others), is currently stored in a secure location to which I alone have access.

With regard to beneficence (Terre Blanche et al., 2006), a quality study into the lived experience of visually impaired dancers and their sighted dance partners could give insight into how people with differing levels of ability describe the effects of participation on their life. This could, in turn, highlight the importance of the availability of inclusive social dance classes.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the research design and methodology for the current study were described and discussed. The participants were introduced, while the recruitment process and the inclusion criteria were clearly defined. A detailed account of the data collection and analysis techniques was given. A discussion of issues relating to validity, reflexivity, and ethical considerations concluded this chapter. Continuing with the theoretical and methodological framework of IPA, the focus shifts in Chapters Five and Six to the findings that were made in relation to the processes undertaken.

CHAPTER FIVE
FINDINGS

Theme 1: Visually impaired university students' experience of participating in an inclusive ballroom dancing class

The visually impaired participants described many physical, social and psychological benefits to their participation in dance. They also verbalised factors promoting their continued participation. While they described many reasons for dance being an enjoyable experience to them, they also described the challenges that they faced in dance. They gave insight into the heteronormative nature of ballroom and Latin American dance, and stated how people with disabilities are expected to uphold such conventions. Their reports of inclusion show a tension between wanting to be included in the dance society, and their acknowledged need for special accommodations to be made in the Differently-abled Class. In addition, they stated how successful they felt the dance society had been in achieving an environment of inclusion and integration.

5.1 Experiences in the Differently-abled Dance Class

The dance class allowed the participants to experience and express themselves through movement and music. They are given the freedom to interpret and perform the choreographed steps in an emotional and meaningful way without being concerned about how they might look, and without having to fear adverse judgement. The class was said to be a safe space in which they were able to be creative within the limits of dance. Richard said, for example:

> *Sometimes I find myself, especially if it's a waltz playing or something, which I really like, you know, um, doing the movements more intensely, or, whatever, depending on the mood. Um, which, I don't know how it looks, but I don't really care. . . . it's quite nice, uh, you know, the, you interpret the music, and you express it through movements. Even if the movements are set movements. . . . you still have this framework of doing it, something, you know, an art.*

Beyond the physical experience of dancing, the participants also spoke about the emotional stimulation that they experienced. Some participants reported enjoying dance as an opportunity for emotional expression. Jessica, for example, said:

> *I think I'm a very dramatic person. I think that's why I like the tango. Because it's so jerky and dramatic. But then I like the fun dances like the samba as well, you know. I like the whole ballroom, the waltz, it's so elegant. The thing is, I love an element in every dance. . . . at first, I think, "Oh, I hate this dance." And then later on, I'm like, "Wait, no, I love this one now."*

Similarly, Stephanie communicated the enjoyment she experienced when role-playing the emotional aspects of the characters whom she portrays when performing a dance routine:

> *I know a lot of the, you know, the instructor's don't necessarily say it, but I like playing with the little, um, when you dance, like, what the character is supposed to be feeling and stuff, and I like making up little stories of what the dance is supposed to be. . . . I like doing that because I get a chance to interpret, like, your acting and your role-playing and stuff like that, into something that you really want doing.*

Along with role-play, some participants reported that dance is a medium that allowed them to use their imagination, and to dream. Rachel, for example, said, *". . . sometimes when I am at home, and I will listen to music, then I can see myself dancing on a stage . . . as if you were a performer."*

Many participants found that the predictability of learning the formalised ballroom dance moves evoked feelings of safety and security, and, in such, they experienced a sense of heightened enjoyment. Jessica, for example, said:

> *It's very nice . . . there's nothing unexpected. You, your partner does, only do the steps that you know. I mean, he won't do something you don't know 'cause, it, and, sokkie [i.e. a form of casual partnered dance], you know, it is, kind of, violent sometimes, because the guy, kind of, throws you around a bit, and you never know what's going to happen.*

Rachel spoke of her enjoyment of formalised steps being due to her fondness of routine and familiarity, when she said:

> *I'm not a person that will stand there dancing by myself, like, in a club. . . . when you just stand there and do your own thing [laughs]. I don't like that. I like dancing with someone. . . . The ballroom, I like the fact that there's a routine, you can memorise "this step is after this step, that step is after the next".*

The feeling of being in control is another aspect of formalised steps and moves that increases the participant's enjoyment of dance. Stephanie, for example, described how using precise movements allows her to maintain control within the dance, in saying:

> *I'm the person, play music and I'll do a set for you, you know. I can't just wiggle around because that, that isn't dancing to me. That's just moving, you know. I think, again, it's more of the control thing inside, in me. I like to have my precise steps and my precise movements going on.*

In relation to their experiences with the dance society, the participants reported that they were exposed to diversity, and that they were forced to challenge their own preconceived ideas of who would enjoy dance. For instance, Jessica said:

> *. . . it's very diverse people, 'cause, I mean, there are international students dancing. . . . you'd expect, um, all the BA people and drama people to dance, but it's, mostly, like, all these BSc people and Engineering people.*

While the participants reported many aspects of the class that they enjoyed, they disliked that they had only one class per week in which to practise their dance skills. They stated that they felt that there was not enough time in which to learn new steps and to improve their technique, as they required individual attention from the instructor. For example, Jessica said, *"An hour out of a week, I need more dancing than that. . . . Sometimes an hour just feels too short. You [are], like, right in the zone now, and then the class is over."*

Similarly, many participants did not appreciate it when other dancers used up their class time, and, more importantly, the instructor's attention, to learn and practise a routine for a society fundraiser or event. They reported that the reason for their class time being used for other purposes related to the small number of differently abled dancers in the society and, to the large amount of space that could be utilised in the studio during that hour. However, such invasion of their class time appeared to leave them feeling neglected, and

as though the class was unproductive. Furthermore, the participants seemed to feel threatened by the possibility of being marginalised and pushed aside for the good of the majority. Richard, for example, said:

> *. . . They had something they had to do the following week in the [name of venue]. They just started to take, they actually took our time frame to teach it to the other people, and I was actually quite annoyed with that. . . . also, we had some, uh, some adult people in the middle of the year show up there, um, and wanted to take part in our class, and, uh, it results in, you know, [name of dance instructor] having less time for us.*

Jessica spoke of the importance of the dance experience, and of how she wanted it protected, in saying:

> *Um, when people dance in our class, fine. But when they take [name of dance instructor]'s attention, when they keep on calling her and saying, "No, no, help me with this" then I'm like, "No, no, no, you're interfering with my class now." 'Cause this is my class time. You know, you paid for the whole year; this is your class time. Don't mess with my class time.*

The pace of the class was described as being too slow for some participants. This had the effect of leaving the dancers involved feeling bored and frustrated, and it called into question the lack of commitment of some dancers who were not in class every week. Their absence appeared to impede the progress of the class and that of the dancers who were consistently in attendance. While the participants enjoyed competing in competitions, practising for the events concerned further delayed their progress in learning new steps and dances. For example, Richard said:

> *The rate at which we learn stuff, it's a bit slow for me. There's a lot of factors influencing that. One is that not all people are there every day, and once they get back they have to learn it all again, which I actually think is, ja, well, if you decide that you are going to do dancing, you should be there every day. But, also, the fact that there's structure to the, uh, you know, there's not so much opportunity for learning new stuff, because you have to train for a competition, you have to train for Intervarsity.*

As a result of their experiences in, and their enjoyment of, the Differently-abled Class, the participants encouraged other visually impaired dancers to join the class. However, they stated that they felt that a person's autonomy had to be respected at the same time. The participants seemed to acknowledge that dance is not for everyone, and that personality factors influence one's experience of it. Jessica, for example, said:

> *It all depends on the person. Like I said, I really discourage, I really won't encourage my one friend to join, because she has that whole space bubble thing. I don't force people into things. Like, I mean, everyone's like, "No, you have to join. You have to join." And she's just like, she doesn't want to. So, I'm just like, "Don't force her." . . . like all sighted people differ, all blind people differ as well. But I would definitely encourage it for someone who is open for stuff like that.*

While there were some negative aspects to the participants' experiences in class, the sum of their experiences had been positive and had further established their passion and love for dance.

5.2 Perceived benefits of participation in dance

The participants identified a number of physical, social and psychological benefits that they enjoyed from being included in the class. From a physical perspective, Richard explained how dancing improved his endurance and physical stamina, by saying, *"I do goalball as well, so I think dance is a very nice endurance exercise, especially the jive, so, it, I think they complement each other quite nicely."* Similarly, Rachel explained how dance is a form of full body workout, and that participating therein had improved her posture:

> *You can feel, um, that you [are] actually doing something, that you [are] exercising and you are using your whole body . . . it's difficult to be in the specific posture, positions, because it's very upright . . . but it's good because it gives you a nice posture, um, not just for dancing, but otherwise.*

Jessica described dance as a form of low-impact sport that did not strain her body:

> *You can see it as a type of sport, right? But it's low-impact. Which is nice, um, because, I mean, I did athletics, and I did sprints, and stuff. And that was quite hectic*

> *on your knees and stuff, you know, on your joints . . . So, and it's nice doing a type of sport that doesn't, um, affect your body in a bad way.*

Stephanie noted that dance afforded her the opportunity to feel graceful and feminine (see section 5.5) in an otherwise graceless body, by stating, "*I feel so light on my feet when I dance, which is very funny 'cause I'm very clumsy [in] every other, any other point."*

The participants also reported a number of social benefits to be gained from participation in dance, including the opportunity to meet new people and to use their own dance skills to interact with their peers. For example, Richard asserted, *". . . it's definitely a social skill and a, you know, something you can do at parties. Even with someone who doesn't know dance."*

For most of the participants, attending the dance classes increased their socialisation experiences outside of the class, which gave them a sense of belonging and community. They reported being invited to more social events and functions through the dance society, as well as through the individual members whom they met there. Jessica, for example, said:

> *. . . [name of dance society] has so many events. . . we start off at (Name of dance society) with a braai, for instance . . . and then afterwards we'd go to [name of dance club] . . . then ice skating. . . . So, you know, you get, you go out and, ja, you do more, because it's the whole of [name of dance society]. . . . I have met so many people at dancing that every time I go to dance, every time I go to [name of on-campus shopping mall], every time I go somewhere, there will be some dance person there.*

Some of the participants appeared to have established close connections with the other dancers as a result of their shared passion for the activity. This created the impression of there being an inclusive group of dance friendships and of there also being an exclusive group of friendships formed beyond the dance context. Jessica said, for example:

> *. . . you have that same passion. You get excited about dancing. . . . you two can be in a group of other friends, and then you'll both see the notification on Facebook of [name of dance society having] invited you to this event, and you'd both get excited,*

> *'cause you're like, "Oh my word! We need to go there. What are we going to dress up like?" And everybody is like, "What? What are these two talking about?"*

While the sense of physical intimacy that is required in partnered dancing proved to be a challenge for the participants (see section 5.4), it also allowed the dancers to feel more relaxed in each other's space once a connection had been formed. This sense of physical closeness was demonstrated through touch and physical proximity when interacting with each other, which the participants found to be less significant or frequent in other friendships. As a result of their participation in the dance class, the dancers were also said to be more progressive and flexible in their thinking. For example, Richard said, *"The dance crowd are probably a bit more prone to, you know, get in each other's physical space than the other crowds. It's very open-minded people. I think you need to be open-minded to actually learn some dance forms."*

The participants reported that their sighted dance partners allowed them to feel safe and secure when they were out in public. The feeling was the result of establishing a relationship that was marked by a sense of understanding and trust in their partner on the dance floor. For example, Jessica noted:

> *. . . if it's one of my dance friends who wants to dance with me [when we go to dance clubs], cool, but I don't know if it's a dance friend or not. So, then my one friend is like, he [is] always like, "No, wait, there's a weird person on his way to [name of participant], no, no, no, let me go fetch her quickly." [Laughs] . . . So, it's very nice that they look out for me.*

In addition, Stephanie said:

> *. . . especially if you're talking about your partner, um, you have a lot more trust in them, I think, physically speaking. . . . you trust them to lead you in the right sense. Where . . . your emotional friend, you might trust them to tell more of your emotional stuff. But if you're crossing a road, you want your dance partner to cross with you.*

Stephanie described how participation in the dance class afforded her the opportunity to meet other visually impaired students, who not only expanded her social world, but who also helped her to encounter others whom she experienced as being "worse off" than her, which was an experience that was comforting to her. She said, *". . . meeting people that*

have it way worse than me and being able to speak to them, and see what they do to cope." Some participants described how taking part in the dance classes had improved their social skills and enabled them to "come out of their shells". Stephanie, for example, noted:

> *I think it's helped me a bit to not be afraid to open up to people, and to, like, ask for help . . . it's definitely helped me to socialise more as well, I think. . . . You know, you come out your shell, being able to use, you know, if you see someone that you know, you say "hi" and you don't just walk really, really fast, you know, past them and not make eye contact.*

The participants experienced a number of psychological benefits from their participation in the dance classes. Jessica, for example, explained how dancing was relaxing, in saying, *". . . it's just relaxing, and it's fun. It immediately cheers me up. No matter how bad my day was, it's always nice to go dancing."* Similarly, Stephanie described how dance provided her with relief from the stress and academic demands of being a university student: *"Ja, just having fun and being able to, for an hour, forget about school work or any other problems or anything, and just do something that I've enjoyed doing since I was very young."*

A number of participants reported that dancing has improved their sense of self-confidence and their social skills. For example, Richard said:

> *Dancing is a social skill you can apply in a lot of areas. . . . we are going to an event on Saturday, and, me and [name of female visually impaired dancer] has already decided that we will, when time permits and there's, you know, good music playing, that we will dance there, just because we can and we like to do it, you know. . . . It also makes you, you learn to be confident with movements . . . well, with yourself and how people sees you.*

Rachel described how participation in dance expanded her knowledge of the sighted world:

> *It's something, um, where you can learn, let's say, in inverted commas, "more about the sighted world" . . . how they do something, how they, how sighted people see*

> *stuff. The way they do, um, things . . . what I mean about that is, um, the way they will teach you, will show you something about the world outside.*

Most of the participants agreed that dance was an opportunity for visually impaired individuals to expand their knowledge of themselves and of their own bodies, as well as that of their partner's body. Richard, for example, said, *". . . you have to be aware of yourself and you have to be aware of your partner as well. Also, you have to make very quick decisions sometimes, to get yourself out of a bad move, or whatever."* Similarly, Jessica explained how she had become more sensitive to the subtle cues of her partner:

> *I love the fact that I know my partner so well by now that he can do this movement, and I know, "Okay, we [are] going into this move". . . . it just happens naturally, you know. . . Like, for instance, with the whisk, I already know he does this weird thing where he goes, like, up and down, and it's, the whole thing of going on the toe, and he moves his body in a certain way, and I'm like, "Oh, whisk!" [Laughs].*

Many participants described how dancing required them to learn to navigate by means of attending to other sensory stimuli. Richard, for example, explained how he had learned to use sound to determine where he and his partner were on the dance floor:

> *. . . If there's walls all around the dance floor, you can hear that you're near the corner because the sound comes off from the wall. . . . I think I can, uh, pick up a lot of, um, things from the reflection of sound, because that's what you actually use, to know where she [i.e. his partner] is. You listen to her footsteps and you listen to the, you know, the sound of the cloth, or whatever. You listen to the sound coming off her as well. So, I knew, theoretically, that it's possible, but it's nice to do it in practice.*

The participants reported that their increased sense of spatial awareness had enabled them to reap benefits beyond the dance floor. It enabled them to move around more easily than they might otherwise have done, and to navigate other environments more adeptly when being led by someone else. For instance, Jessica noted:

> *. . . I follow other people better now, body language-wise. . . . walking with a person . . . I'm more focused on, "Okay, this person is, like, okay, he's doing this little pause thingy. That might mean there's a step or something, you know."*

The perceived benefits of dance were, therefore, found to be widespread, and they were also found to have had an effect on many aspects of the visually impaired dancers' experience both inside and outside the dance class. The benefits that were stated by the dancers were physical, social and psychological in nature. The participants said that they had observed an improvement in their self-awareness, as well as in their awareness of others, and of the sighted world. The learning of subtle and discreet cues had facilitated their understanding and interpretation of another person's body language. The participants reported that they had become more adept at using sensory stimuli beyond the visual to engage with their surroundings. They also noted a marked increase in their sense of spatial awareness.

5.3 Perception of factors promoting participation

Many of the participants spoke of the sense of accomplishment that they experienced when the partnership achieved a sense of cooperation and interdependence (see section 5.4). The participants reported that their progress served to promote their continued participation. Richard, for example, noted, *". . . you feel you can accomplish something, you know, you are a part of something bigger, especially dancing with a partner, 'cause, you know, you and the partner becomes this unit."* Stephanie described feeling accomplished and satisfied regarding her partnership when they finally executed a move correctly, in saying, *"It's comforting as well, that you can fumble along together and then you, once you both got the steps right, it's like it's a victory for both of you, not just the one person . . ."* Many of the participants expressed a sense of pride in their achievements, which motivated them to keep committed to dance. For example, Richard said, *"I think I have accomplished a lot in the time [since] I started dancing. Um, I hope to accomplish a lot more."*

Similarly, the participants spoke of the joy of learning new steps and of the sense of satisfaction that they gained in mastering them. Jessica, for example, said: *"I just love learning new moves [laughs]. . . . I always thought I didn't like the jive, and then when I started learning new moves, I'm like I love the jive now."*

Richard expressed feelings of mastery, competence and accomplishment in relation to dance: *"I've actually taught people how to do, like, basic cha-cha stuff."* Rachel spoke of her appreciation of the opportunity that she had in class to practise a skill that she would

be able to use throughout the remainder of her life. She asserted that she enjoyed being challenged and achieving greater expertise in dance, which contributed to her desire to continue participating. She said:

> *[I like that] someone teach[es] you something that you will be able to do, hopefully, for the rest of your life. Um, you gain experience . . . I love new challenges, so to be able to, before a class you can say, "I've never danced a waltz, or the jive, before," and by the end of that class, then you are able, although it's not perfect yet, or whatever, but [by] the end of that class, you know how to dance a waltz.*

Appreciation and respect were shown for the dance instructor and for the participants' sighted partner. The dance instructor was considered by the participants to be open to hearing their requests to learn specific ballroom and Latin American dances. The participants appeared to feel as though they had some sense of control over what they learned. This increased their enjoyment of the class, and it kept them coming back to it. The dance instructor's experience was acknowledged, leading to her being held in high esteem by those whom she taught. Jessica, for example, said:

> *. . . [name of dance instructor] is quite open with stuff. I mean, the one time I was like, "[Name of dance instructor], I really wanna learn this." And she was like, "Okay, let me teach you." . . . obviously, she won't go teach you something that's, like, above you, too heavy, you know. She won't teach me, like, the slow foxtrot until I know a few other stuff, you know. So there are some, but, I mean, she's quite open, you know.*

Richard said the following with regard to the dance instructor: *"I think they did a very good job. [Name of dance instructor] is a good teacher. She has a lot of experience."*

Their sighted dance partners were considered not only to be their support, but they were also regarded as a secondary, or assistant, teacher. Their advanced skills and experience were also admired by the participants. Stephanie, for example, observed: "*. . . sighted dance partners who aren't just like beginners or intermediates, or whatever, like you. They're the, a trainer or something, so that they know what they are doing, so they can help you. So, that's really, really nice."*

Stephanie, who acknowledged her appreciation of the sighted partners as volunteers in the Differently-abled Class, assumed that all the volunteers who worked with people with disabilities would be caring, compassionate individuals. In this respect, she observed:

> *. . . also the fact that the dance partners, um, they volunteer to help [name of dance instructor] in the Differently-abled Class. You're not gonna get mean people that volunteer, you know [laughs], to dance with someone who can't see well, can't hear well, or, you know, can't move properly, or something, you know. You're going to have someone who is patient and kind.*

Most of the participants showed appreciation for the society's attempts to regard all dancers equally, while, nevertheless, attending to their unique needs. For example, Rachel said:

> *If they someone, say, that pities you, then obviously they will, you know, teach you like a child. Um, but with [name of dance instructor], you [are] just another student, and you want to learn to dance, ja, and she's here to teach you. So, she's gotta teach you just like teaching someone else, like an able body.*

In addition, Stephanie noted that she does not feel infantilised in the Differently-abled Class:

> *. . . you don't want to be, like, faffed over all the time. . . . you do need extra help, but knowing that if you say, "Okay, back off now" that they will. . . . if you're able to move and do the steps and everything, then you're no different from anyone else. . . . they don't baby you. . . . which is also nice, 'cause, oh my goodness, being babied is ridiculous.*

The dance instructor, and the society as a whole, are reported to show the participants respect by treating them similarly to how they treat the able-bodied dancers. They state that, rather than feeling infantilised, they tend to feel so understood, supported and challenged in the class that they are encouraged to participate still further. The learning and mastery of new steps increases their sense of joy and accomplishment, and increases their willingness to return to class.

5.4 Perceived challenges to participation

Most of the participants had experienced some degree of anxiety that had led to them being somewhat hesitant at first about joining the class. A feeling of self-consciousness, as well as a certain degree of fear about having to meet new people and about being in an unknown situation, were common challenges faced by the participants. For example, Jessica said, *"Maybe a little bit [hesitant] in the beginning . . . the whole thing of [sigh] approaching these new people about it, and going to class, and stuff."* Rachel mused:

> *In the beginning it was, it was quite "Must I do that or not?" Because I actually am a bit . . . self-conscious. . . . then I thought, but this is something I wanted to do since I was a child, so maybe I must just start doing it and take it from there. . . . I must say, I was quite excited in the beginning to start. It was just, um, just that self-conscious thing.*

Some of the participants reported that they held a negative perception of their own abilities, due to their limited experience and understanding of what dance entails. This resulted in feelings of trepidation regarding their ability to learn to dance, before they joined the Differently-abled Class. They were, however, able to overcome their misgivings when they realised that they were able to learn to perform the dance steps. For instance, Jessica revealed:

> *. . . as a child I saw all this dancing, and I'm like, "Oh my word! I would never be able to do that." I thought it was this crazy, difficult thing to do. That it's, kind of, impossible. So, I was, like, wondering, "Oh my word! How are these people going to teach us this?" . . . But when you start doing it, you see it's, like, "Oh my word! I can actually do this. Wow!"*

Stephanie described how she had initially been slightly reluctant to join the dance class, because in so doing, she would have had to identify herself as "disabled", which would mean that others might also see her as disabled. In order to participate in the class, she had had to become comfortable with accepting the label of "differently abled", about which she appeared to be conflicted because of her fear of prejudice:

> *. . . if someone from your course sees you in the Differently-abled Class . . . they'd know you have a disability, um, and they might tell other people. . . most people*

> *don't understand about any form of disability, whether mental, physical, whatever, um, and they're very quick to judge, I have noticed. . . . I think it's more of a concern that someone might take it the wrong way, you know, or not understand the full situation.*

Added to Stephanie's hesitancy in starting to dance again was her fear of causing further damage to her eyes. The operation that she had undergone was a traumatic experience that she did not want to face a second time. Although she had been told that it was safe to begin exercising again, she experienced residual distress and anxiety in this regard. Stephanie described the situation as follows:

> *I was a little [hesitant] because I hadn't danced or done any exercise, um, since August, Grade 11. . . . I'm very protective over my left eye, um, because, officially, the rings won't move now, but I'm always just so scared [laughs] something will go wrong, 'cause I'm not going through that again.*

Many of the participants described how learning to ballroom dance required them to learn to trust their partner, and to relinquish their desire for control. Stephanie, for example, noted:

> *. . . when we [previously] did the ballroom in the concerts, if I could see he was taking me too close to [the edge of] the stage, I would turn us both, you know. Where you can't necessarily do that, um, when you can't see so well. . . . Definitely put a lot more trust in your partner, kind of, whether you want to or not. You have to.*

With regard to the issues of trust and of having to give up control, as well as of interdependence and of being comfortable with depending on her partner, Jessica said:

> *. . . every time I dance with someone, they're like, "Wow! You follow so well." And then I'm like, "I don't really have a choice. You're the one with the eyes." [Laughs] . . . But I think it's really because I just, I rely on what he can see, um, so I move with him. I trust that he will look out for me.*

Some of the participants described how they required the assistance of the sighted dancers to learn new steps and to navigate the dance floor, but that it was not always easy

to accept this help, and the feelings of dependency that doing so evoked. Stephanie, for example, noted:

> *I am such a control freak. Um [laughs], it's probably a good thing I lost my, lost quite a bit of my sight, 'cause it's forcing me to ask people for help [laughs]. Um, it's not easy for me. . . . I would say definitely with dancing, it's, uh, especially ballroom, um, it's a very big thing. One, besides the bumping into people and falling off of stuff, um, you have to be in sync with them for it to look nice, or to move properly.*

Having to change partners appeared to be a challenge for most of the participants. They reported that it took a while to establish a relationship with their partner, and that the sighted partners needed to be taught how to dance with the visually impaired participants, who needed to learn to interpret their sighted partner's signals. In order to master such skills, Richard and his partner made use of discreet cues or signals so as to be able to navigate the dance floor. Such signals were agreed upon by both the partners concerned as the most effective, yet inconspicuous, manner in which to avoid colliding with others mid-dance. The creation of an effective partnership appeared to rely on the cooperation and interdependence of both partners involved (see section 5.3). In this respect, Richard said:

> *You learn to read your partner, which is one, which is another reason why it's difficult to, uh, change partners, because every partner is different. You have to train yourself all over again to recognise their cues. . . . it takes about, you know, probably a week to teach them enough so that we dance lekker [i.e. "nicely"]. . . . so what we develop is that she would be holding me, you know, with her hand there, wherever, and then when we get to the corner she just, like, move[s] her fingers near to each other, and then I know it's a corner. . . . Or, sometimes there's people in the way, and we have to dance around them. . . . So, we, I have to teach them to, like, just move my hand a bit this way or that way, depending on the direction we have to go.*

Managing inter-partner communication presented a further challenge to some dancers. In order to establish an effective and lasting partnership, the participants stated how they needed to keep the lines of communication open. Richard, for example, noted:

> *. . . you have to focus a lot on communication, because she is not only your partner which you are leading, but she is also your eyes in a lot of respects. . . . any, uh,*

> *problem with communication breaks this unit, so, the art, if I can call it that, is to make the communication as fluid as possible.*

The participants also described the challenge of attaining physical intimacy and of coping with the experience of physical proximity that ballroom dancing entails (see section 5.2). For example, Richard said:

> *I definitely was [concerned about personal space], and I think most blind people are . . . you have no way of, well, you can't easily see what people are doing around you. So, you, one way of being sure about what's going on around you is, you just keep people at a distance. . . . I was a bit uncomfortable with the fact that, you know, it's a very physical contact, uh, which is something that I wasn't used to. Like, uh, [name of dance instructor] would come and just, like, show you, "No, you have to do this." You, like, [think to yourself] "Don't touch my face." [Spoken in a deep, menacing tone of voice, followed by laughter]*

Jessica spoke of the physical intimacy of dance in the following way:

> *Sometimes she'll [i.e. the dance instructor will] come and, especially if your posture isn't right, then she'll come and put her arms, like, here, and here, and she'll pull you back a bit, you know. Or she'll come and put her head, her hand here and say, "Uh-uh, up!" You know. And then you shouldn't really have a personal bubble, space, you know. My one friend can't stand stuff like that, so she doesn't dance because of that.*

Most of the participants described how learning new dance steps posed a challenge, because they could not rely on the normal convention of being able to watch the instructor and then imitate her moves. Jessica, for example, said:

> *You can't stand in front, show, and then go for it. She [i.e. the dance instructor] needs to, like, we always dance until she comes to you and then, like, "Okay, let me show you new moves." And she has to go to, from one person to the next, to the next.*

The participants described a number of strategies that they employed to overcome the above-mentioned challenge. For instance, Jessica mentioned:

> *. . . my one friend actually, if he shows me a new move . . . he takes my hands, and he shows me. And I realised that that is the, one of the nicest ways to show me a move. . . . It's just easy to take that blueprint from your hands and just apply it to your feet, you know, because my hands are my eyes at the moment, so I'm using my hands for everything. And if you show me with my hands, then I'm like, "Okay, cool. I've got it now."*

Stephanie, who was partially sighted, described the strategy that was best used to teach her new steps:

> *. . . when I'm learning new steps, uh, the person who is teaching me or showing it to me needs to be close to me. I can't see if they're far away. Um, and if you're dancing with more than one person around you . . . they need to know that I won't be able to judge whether they're coming towards me or [going] away from me.*

Some participants described how they had learned to dance using a set of instructions, or internal dialogue. With practice, the use of such dialogue tends to become procedural memory. Many of the participants seemed to assume that the way in which sighted dancers learned to dance was different, and most likely easier, for them than it was for the visually impaired participants, as the sighted dancers had a visual image of what they needed to do, which was then imitated. For example, Richard said:

> *It takes longer to get to that point [i.e. learning to dance as a visually impaired individual], because if you're sighted you can see the other people, how they are doing it. . . . it taught me to concentrate a lot on technique, and when I have to concentrate on technique the only thing I have to go on is what I have been taught. . . . So, it's . . . like, almost instructions I have to remember. Uh, which gets [to be] second nature at some point. . . . you start using your muscle memory.*

According to the visually impaired dancers, the use of internal dialogue can prove to be problematic, as they sometimes become too rigid in their movements as a result. Receiving exact instructions can also be a challenge at times because dance is not an exact science, but rather it allows sufficient space for the interpretation of movement. Richard described this challenge as follows:

> *I want to know exact instructions, and sometimes in dancing you can't get exact instructions. . . . I almost want to know how much degrees I have to turn when I turn. . . . I would usually ask, you know, very specific stuff, but you can't be too rigid because then it gets boring. . . . you get like a basic framework of how it's supposed to be. And you have to do what you think is right and just go with it, because you have no visual feedback to verify.*

In the context of learning new dance steps, the participants spoke about the importance of participating in small dance classes and in receiving individual attention from the instructor. They seemed to value the kind of special attention that could be made under such circumstances and the accommodations that were made to enable their participation in the dance classes. Jessica, for example, said:

> *. . . I like the one-on-one 'cause then I know what to do. Um, I don't like it if someone is there in front telling you what to do 'cause then I don't know what to do. . . . if a lot of other people dance in our class, yoh! Then I'm like, "What are all these people doing in my class? I'm not getting the attention [that I need]." [Said in an indignant tone of voice]*

Although the participants articulated a desire for accommodation to be made to suit their abilities, they also explicitly stated that they did not want to be subjected to "charity". For example, when speaking about his dance partner, Richard described how important it was for him that she shared his motives for participation, *". . . it's better if your partner sees it as a challenge, something she also really wants to do, you know, for the sake of dancing. Not for the sake of, 'I'm going to help this poor blind person.'"*

Some participants described how dancing evoked their insecurities. For example, Richard laughingly said, *". . . all the people that have sight think, 'Wow, they dance good.' And I know, no, we don't, but anyway."* In this context, the participants also spoke about how dancing forced them to confront their feelings and fears about themselves. Stephanie had the following to say with regard to having to face her insecurities while dancing:

> *What's funny for me is that, um, the guys, they don't even blink. Um, which is nice for me, 'cause then I can be embarrassed for both of us. . . . it's nice, um, after the first few minutes or the first two dances, or so, 'cause then you're back in sync with the*

> *other person, and it's like, okay, you got your embarrassed out. It's fine. Now you can just dance, you know.*

Some participants expressed a feeling that, at times, the actions of the other members of the class contributed to their insecurities and feelings of self-consciousness. Not only did the dancer's emotional state have an effect on their enjoyment of, and concentration in, the class, but the way in which the other dancers behaved also played a role in their experience of the class. Rachel said, for instance:

> *If there's one negative thing, sometimes that bothers me, is when people laugh and they don't tell you why. When you [are] actually dancing with them, and they would, will laugh at something, or someone else, and they wouldn't tell you, if, then I would ask, "Okay, but what's the joke? I also want to laugh about it." And then, sometimes, your partner won't tell you. . . . Whether it's now for laughing at myself, or laughing for the other person that's also laughing about it, but share . . . otherwise everyone else is laughing, but then you [are] just standing there. . . . just again, my own insecurities that sometimes gets in the way.*

Some participants described having to negotiate other people's preconceived ideas about blind people and their ability to dance. Jessica, for example, explained how she had encountered this in saying, "*. . . people always think, you know, 'No, but if you're blind, you can still move your body.' Yes, but you can't see what the other people are doing."* Alternatively, Jessica described her experience of people who expressed a belief that a blind person would be unable to dance:

> *It's another experience you have. It's another ability you have. Just because you can't see doesn't mean you can't dance. And I always have this thing when I meet new people . . . or I'm wearing my [name of dance society]'s hoodie, and they're like, "Oh, you dance?" "Yes, no, of course I dance." And then I'd be like, "You know, if I can, you can. Anybody can dance. It's easy." Not easy but, you know, it's, anybody is able to do it.*

A further challenge for the participants came from their sighted partners not being confident in themselves and in their own dance abilities. As the visually impaired dancers already tended to rely on their sighted partners to navigate the dance floor and to avoid collisions, they found it useful if their sighted partner was more experienced and was on a

more advanced level than themselves, in order that they might assist the visually impaired participants with the dance steps and movements that they were required to do. For instance, Stephanie noted, *". . . if you were two newbies dancing together, I'm sure there'd be a lot of obstacles [laughs] for both of you to get over, individually and together . . . especially if you don't know one another as well."* In addition, Richard said:

> *I think the worst thing is if your partner is unsure, and, you know, always gives the impression that she is unsure, which happened to me once. . . . every time we bumped into some people, you know, partners who know me, we're just like, "Oh well, let's go on." You know, but she is like, if we bump into someone, she immediately stopped [pause], and then we started again.*

A psychological challenge that was reported by the participants was that of having to face feelings of self-blame, self-doubt or lowered self-confidence when the partnership did not flow easily. The participants seemed to feel that they were at fault when mistakes were made on the dance floor. They appeared to take full responsibility for such occurrences, rather than sharing the blame, as is usually seen in a typical partnership. Stephanie, for example, stated:

> *[My partners hinder me] only when they step on my feet [laughs]. [Name of sighted partner] has only done it twice, but I'm pretty sure it was my fault. I think, I'm pretty sure I put my foot in the wrong place and he didn't realise it. Ja, so, it's actually my fault [laughs].*

Some participants reported that, for a visually impaired person, dance is an activity that is unknown and which can, therefore, threaten their understanding of themselves and of their own abilities, as well as their experience of their own bodies. Being placed under the duress of such a threat tends to evoke a sense of anxiety that needs to be tolerated when learning to dance. Richard described this situation as follows:

> *Some of my blind friends don't really understand it, because they haven't danced, so they have no reference frame, or no experience with dancing. . . . I think it's something some, a lot of, people are a bit afraid of. And it's, you have to get out of your comfort zone to do it.*

For some of the participants, it was a challenge to find enough time to attend dance classes. It seemed that the university students had many competing demands on their time, and that these tended to undermine sustained participation. For example, Stephanie said, *"When I can get there, I really enjoy it, but sometimes, you know, 'cause, like [laughs] you have a 500 word essay for, like, [in] three hours [time], so you need to do that first, unfortunately."*

Many participants described dance as an expensive activity. The need to buy dancing shoes and costumes could be challenging for a student. The challenge was overcome with parental support and financial assistance. Stephanie described the situation as follows, *"[My parents say], you know, 'If you need dance shoes, you can have any dance shoes'. 'If you need a costume, you can have the costume.' So, so, that's very nice, um, that they are so supportive."* The idea of financial support was echoed in Jessica's words:

> *. . . for instance, I needed new dance shoes. Mine broke, and I was like, "Oh my word! They're R400." I couldn't get shoes, and my parents, my family was like, "Okay, you can pay us back later. We'll buy it for you so long."*

From the reports that were made by the visually impaired participants, it appears that they faced many challenges of a physical, social and psychological nature when learning to dance, as well as when making the decision to join the dance society. Their sighted partners' levels of confidence and expertise, as well as their partners' motivation for dancing with them, might have had an adverse effect on their experience of dance. Communication in the partnership and having one consistent dance partner were of crucial importance to the visually impaired participants when they were learning to dance. Finding time in their academic schedule to attend the dance class became problematic at times. Financial matters also proved to be a challenge for the dancers.

5.5 Dance and the performance of gender

According to the visually impaired participants, ballroom dance was a setting in which conventional gender roles were performed and reinforced. The way in which the participants spoke about their dance experience reflected the idea that ballroom dance is not only a heteronormative activity, but that it is also explicitly traditional in terms of masculine and feminine stereotyping. For example, Jessica said:

> *. . . it's easier being the girl than the guy, I think . . . when you're the girl, your partner, like, watches, you know, he can see and he guides you. He leads you. You just follow. . . . He [i.e. my dance partner] always says the guy is just to make the girl look good [laughs], and that's why we wear the pretty dresses and they just wear black-and-white [laughs].*

In addition to stating that she felt graceful and feminine when performing dance steps (see section 5.2), Stephanie admitted that she enjoyed having to fit in with the traditional gender roles. She further acknowledged the role of the male as protector within the partnership, in saying, *". . . that's the one nice thing, the male leads. . . . if you two are going towards someone, they steer you away."* Rachel highlighted the submissive role of the female within a dance partnership: *"Your partner can lead you, um, that's now from the lady's side . . . you must just be good at following him."*

The need for compliance with such gender roles and conventions was reinforced in terms of partnered dance by the sighted participants as well as by the visually impaired females. The endurance of such stereotypes was, however, challenged in terms of a partnership existing between a visually impaired male dancer and his sighted female partner. The participants stated that, although the male partner was expected to fulfil the typical gender role that was assigned to him as the leader on the dance floor, his impaired vision prevented him from fully performing this function. His sighted partner, therefore, had to take on the role of a covert navigator during their performance so that they could perform effectively as a partnership, while giving him the freedom to dictate their dance moves. In this way, the resultant inclusive partnership gave the impression of upholding the gender conventions prescribed in dance. Richard described his experience as follows:

> *. . . it's something the partner has to get used to, because it's a bit different. . . . I think they have to watch much more than they usually do. Usually a girl just goes along. The guy does all the watching and the, everything, but they almost have to lead me, but not obviously. Like, navigate almost. . . . I just knew you have to give, you have to notify me in some way and you have to steer me in some way.*

The persistence of gender roles and stereotypes might, therefore, be understood as being a form of foundation on which the ballroom dancers functioned, regardless of their (dis)ability. Without the continuance of such stereotyping, the assumption was that the

structure of the partnership was threatened, and that it might have been considered to fall outside the norms of societal comfort and standards.

5.6 Looking good and fitting in

The participants, both implicitly and explicitly, acknowledged that ballroom dance was a spectator sport that was performed for sighted people who could appreciate the spectacle, and the grace and motor skills of the dancers concerned. Many of the participants spoke about how important it is for the dance steps to "look right" and to "be pretty". They spoke about how they needed sighted people to tell them whether they were executing a move correctly, and whether their appearance was acceptable. For example, Jessica said:

> *. . . other people are able to see what that person does. And they can see, "Oh! That looks prettier if you do your knee like that, or you do your foot like that, or you move your arm like that." I do what people show me, and it might not always look as pretty as other people, um, how they do it.*

In addition, Rachel commented:

> *So, where you also always have this thing of, do you look good with your partner? . . . I think I want to, um, to be the best for other people too . . . and that sometimes might be a problem, because you [are] trying too hard, and by trying too hard, you actually don't succeed.*

In this context, the participants contrasted ballroom dance with wheelchair dance, in which it is more obvious that the dancers are impaired. It seems to be implicit that, in ballroom dance, the goal is to fit in and perform the moves as if both partners are sighted (hence appearing "normal"). The greatest compliment would be for a spectator not to know that one partner is visually impaired, hence suggesting that visually impaired individuals are usually regarded in some way to be "abnormal". The above-mentioned experience is evident in Jessica's words:

> *Someone needs to tell you to do that, otherwise you're never going to do that. And you're always going to look different from the sighted people. . . . But people tend to . . . go more for wheelchair dancing because it looks different.*

Part of the appeal of the formalised structure of ballroom dance seemed to be that it provided reassurance for the participants that what they were doing "looked right". The visually impaired dancers seemed to have an implicit fear that, without stylised, structured movements, they might draw attention to themselves. Richard, for example, articulated this experience by describing why he disliked free dance:

> *I don't really like, um, free dancing, you know, rave music, or whatever. Just because of the fact that I don't know how I'm looking. I don't know what's expected of me, because everyone does whatever they want, but I still think there is some things one usually does and one usually don't do. So, I prefer rigid, formal steps, which, in which I can, you know, with a little room I'm given, do some interpretation.*

Some of the participants spoke about the importance of receiving feedback, and about the value of competition. They expressed a desire to know how they were performing and to receive confirmation that they were performing the steps correctly. They wanted to know that they looked good. For instance, Richard said:

> *And I actually, you know, compared level of sight with how you do in the competition . . . what it shows is, the more you see, the better you do, which is actually obvious to begin with. Um, but still, it makes you feel, you know, um, it makes you think a bit when you get last or second to last. . . . So, that, as well, gives you some, you know, framework, or idea of where you fit in.*

Receiving honest feedback was important to the participants not only in terms of mastery, but also in order to challenge their insecurities. Richard, for example, stated, "*You want someone who is not afraid to tell you, you are doing something wrong . . . she must be very honest, at all times. If I, if I do something weird, I want to know about it."* In addition, Rachel observed:

> *. . . when I feel self-conscious, I want to see for myself, but do I really look different? . . . I feel bad to ask, um, "How is this one dancing?" Um, "Who is better between this and this person, or between us, or?" Um, not because you want to be the best . . . it's just for yourself, for your own self-confidence and your self-esteem, that at least there is now something that you really are good at. And I feel, sometimes, that people will just tell you something to make you feel better.*

While the participants' focus was on fitting in, and on looking normal within the dance, they also reported that dance had helped them to overcome their insecurities regarding their movements, which had been a source of concern for them throughout their childhoods due to their lack of vision or their ability to receive visual cues. For example, Richard noted:

> *I think one thing is that it made me less concerned about my movements, and how I look, and everything. Uh, in school, they will usually tell you, you know, "Don't do this because it looks bad, or don't do that because." . . . they have this refrain about the fact that [if] you can[not] see someone, [it] doesn't mean they can[not] see you, which is actually a bit too much, actually. When I got to university, I was completely afraid of doing anything, because I don't know how it will look. And it's something rectified by dancing. You know, you just decide at some point, I'm just going to do whatever I think best, and if someone doesn't like it, it's their problem. If they really don't like it, they should tell me what they don't like, and then I can fix it.*

It seemed to be important to the visually impaired participants that they were not protected or sheltered from the truth, so as to help ensure that they looked good when they danced, and so that they might fit in competently and aesthetically with the sighted dancers.

5.7 Narratives of inclusion

All of the visually impaired participants reported their desire to experience inclusion in the dance society as well as in the Differently-abled Class. To these dancers, inclusion meant the giving and receiving of support between all members of the dance society, in class as well as at competitions and social functions. For example, Richard spoke of what inclusion should entail, in saying:

> *. . . people should be encouraged to go to other classes. Not to take part necessarily, because you don't want to steal other people's teaching time, but to observe. . . . I think it would be educational, if nothing else, um, and supportive for the rest of the society to be there. But we should also be at their classes. . . . it should go both ways.*

In addition, Stephanie spoke of what support in an inclusive partnership should look like, when she said:

> *If you think you're doing a step wrong, but you're not actually, and they tell you, "No, no, you're fine" . . . that can be very comforting and helpful. . . . if you do mess up a step, they can laugh with you, not, you know, just have a teacher shout at you or something [laughs].*

The participants stated that being exposed to, and making friends with, members of the other dance classes would also reflect an inclusive society. For example, Richard observed:

> *The time I noticed it the most is when we went to Intervarsity [i.e. a dance competition].I discovered that I know, you know, a very small fraction of the people in the society, actually, because I'm not at class with them. Um, [name of visually impaired dancer] knew more people, because she used to be on the com [i.e. the dance committee].*

However, there was conflict between the participants' reports of wanting inclusion, while they were experiencing feelings of exclusion when they were learning to dance. Richard described feeling alone and isolated in dance, as there were few dancers with similar experiences and abilities with whom he could consult and from whom he could learn. He said:

> *. . . there are not many blind dancers you can go to for instruction. . . . So, we had to develop some things and it's something . . . I had to discover for myself. . . . I think the idea is that one have more experience, you know, and you can speak to other people about certain dances, what works, and tips. . . . the sighted classes are much bigger. So, there's more opinions and more tips, and whatever. On another level, I don't know how valid, um, tips or information from sighted people would be to a blind dancer, um, because we do stuff differently.*

While the ultimate goal, according to the visually impaired participants, was to experience inclusion in the dance society, they also acknowledged their need for certain accommodations to be made, and for separation to take place. For example, Jessica noted:

> *They said, um, every blind person is equal to five able-bodied people . . . because it's a bit more effort to teach us. And it's not like we're stupid . . . you need one-on-*

> *one. You need to explain stuff in words. You can't just show us. . . . Our classes are separate from the other classes because it is kind of difficult to teach a blind person between all these sighted people.*

Stephanie described the need for separation as follows:

> *I think that's one of those situations where you do need to separate, because you need more attention, and you need to be taught a little bit slower. Um, and you need to have a dance partner who knows what they're doing. . . . if you're all in a beginners class, and you can't see so well, and the person who is dancing with you has no idea what you're doing, you're just gonna fall over one another.*

Rachel offered a solution to the desired separation of classes when she said:

> *I prefer us being alone. . . . say, for instance, we teach on a Monday, or on a Tuesday, and just practise on a Thursday. Then on a Thursday it's fine, then I don't mind the people, um, but when they try to teach me something, um, I don't want too many people around me. It makes me feel nervous.*

The visually impaired participants agreed that inclusion was desirable and that it should be an integral part of their dance experience. A tension was seen to arise, however, between them wanting inclusion, and their feelings of exclusion when learning to dance, while acknowledging their need for accommodations in, and separation for, their dance class.

5.8 Conclusion

The visually impaired participants stated many benefits and challenges of dance that are of a physical, social and psychological nature. Their experiences were shaped by the participants' likes and dislikes of the Differently-abled Class. Such factors either promoted their continued participation, or presented barriers to their enjoyment of the class. Heteronormative gender roles appeared to be reinforced through dance, regardless of the dancer's (dis)ability. The participants explained the need for them to look good while they dance, and to fit in competently and aesthetically with their sighted partner. In addition, issues of inclusion seemed to be a point of contention in the Differently-abled Class, as well as in the broader dance society.

CHAPTER SIX
FINDINGS

Theme 2: Sighted university students' experience of participating in an inclusive ballroom dance class alongside visually impaired dancers

The sighted students reported enjoying the class, although it had provided a number of challenges. They described how the experience had improved their own skill as dancers, and how it had made them more sensitive to issues of inclusion, and more empathetic and appreciative of their own abilities. Participation in the class had also challenged and changed their perception of visually impaired students and disability. They described how they had come to admire and idealise the visually impaired students. Dance was described as being heteronormative and they identified how traditional gender roles were reproduced through dance. The participants raised important questions about how inclusive the class really was, and suggested ways in which the class might be made more inclusive.

6.1 Experiences in the Differently-abled Dance Class

The participants highlighted many aspects of the Differently-abled Class that they enjoyed. Some participants stated how the friendly competition in the Differently-abled Class was a motivating factor for them continuing to participate in the class. The feelings of satisfaction that came from improving their skills, and the recognition of accomplishment that they had gained through winning this friendly competition, added to their enjoyment of the class. James said, for example:

> *. . . in the Differently-abled Class there is always friendly competition. . . . we have this differently abled competition every year in August . . . we don't really worry about the couples from other universities or other schools. We just compete against each other. So, there's always been that . . . friendly pressure to push yourself and just improve. For the sake of you and your partner's progress, but also to, you know, claim first prize [laughs], amongst the few couples that are here.*

Some of the participants described how lowered expectations of the visually impaired dancers created less tension in the class, which assisted in creating an enjoyable atmosphere. For example, Sarah said:

> *I actually think sometimes maybe we do laugh a bit more than in the other classes, um, but maybe in the Star Grade, it's because she has higher expectations of us, and then we don't meet that, and so then she gives us hell . . . [laughs].*

Like the visually impaired dancers, most of the sighted participants showed great respect and admiration for the dance instructor. For example, Sarah said:

> *. . . she is very much open to "nothing is impossible" . . . she works with so many differently abled, from wheelchairs to blind and everything . . . she is strict with the guys. . . . you would think because they can't see or something that she would be, like, more soft with them. Not a chance! [Laughs]. . . . She is everything to us. The dance society will definitely not be the same when the day comes that she has to leave us.*

The participants appeared to have positive perceptions of the visually impaired dancers' abilities and dance technique. Sarah stated that although they could not see, their lack of vision did not mean that they could not dance. She said, "*They can dance. There is nothing wrong with their dancing at all. It's just that they can't see."* Matthew expressed a belief that they were better at partnering than were the sighted dancers with whom he had danced. He said:

> *. . . their technique is much better. . . . sometimes when you dance with a person that is a bit shorter than you, they tend to not, um, take big steps. So now because she can't see, she just feels the way I'm dancing, and then she steps the length that I'm stepping.*

Like the visually impaired dancers, some of the sighted participants described their enjoyment of the formalised steps in ballroom and Latin American dance. They seemed to dislike casual dance as it made them feel self-conscious. Matthew said, for example:

> *But I don't do any, like . . . "los dans" [i.e. a form of informal social dancing]. . . . it feels stupid when you do that [laughs]. . . . standing in the club just shaking yourself around there, no [laughs]. . . . I want to do moves. Ja, intricate and complicated moves.*

Some participants described how they tried to “normalise” the dance experience for the visually impaired dancers, so as to counter their “abnormal” lived experience of receiving special treatment. An assumption seemed to be made that if they did not think about the impairment, that it did not exist, thereby enabling the “normalising” of the experience for the sighted participants as a result. Such assumptions might suggest a need for the sighted dancers to accept the existence of varied bodies and abilities. Sarah commented, for instance:

> *I try and make it like its normal, like “Come on, mister, we’re going to dance now.” And we go off, because I think it helps me if I don’t overthink about it. I don’t like to always think of him as being blind, but he is. I think that’s the fact of it is you can’t deny it. You have to accept it, but it’s not an excuse either, as to why I’m not going to dance properly, or why I dance differently with him than I dance with other guys.*

Matthew described how he treated the visually impaired dancers the same as he did anyone else:

> *I treat them like they’re normal. And I just, I dance with them. So, obviously I, like [name of dance instructor], I have to stay with them . . . I lead them, don’t let go of their hands while we’re dancing. But the rest of it, I go on. Like, um, maybe it’s because [name of dance instructor] taught me like that.*

While some of the sighted participants explicitly stated that they treated the visually impaired dancers in the same way as everyone else, the sighted dancers also spoke about how they censored themselves when interacting with the visually impaired dancers. For example, Sarah said, *“I know he is different, so I am very, then, cautious. I don’t, I’m not going to complain about stuff to him, or I complain less I think, or I try at least.”*

Most sighted participants stated that their focus during the Differently-abled Class was on their visually impaired partner, rather than on improving their own dance skills. The Differently-abled Class was viewed, then, as a setting in which the sighted partners could assist the visually impaired dancers to learn how to dance, and to practise their skills at their own pace. This focus on the visually impaired dancers lent itself to developing an attitude of charity, in terms of which the sighted dancers might have believed that they

were selflessly helping the visually impaired dancer without gaining anything from the experience. Sarah, for instance, noted:

> *This is their time for them to learn, and I'm there just to facilitate and to help them learn more steps, be better dancers, and to dance with [name of visually impaired partner], whatever steps he wants to [do], and however many dances he wants to [do]. . . . I do have my own time where I get to dance. When I dance with [name of visually impaired partner], it's for him.*

Matthew spoke of how he enjoyed the company of his visually impaired friends and of how he felt free to help them without the obligation of having to do so. This attitude of offering support without charity appeared to reflect the adoption of a more respectful approach towards the needs of the visually impaired dancers without thinking of visually impaired people as being needy and fragile. Matthew described his attitude in the following way:

> *. . . maybe it's because I like helping people, in a way, that I, I don't feel obligated. . . . I don't want to be like, "I'm helping blind people" [laughs]. But, I don't know, it feels like you're, like, someone's protector. . . . you wanna say now, ja, it makes you feel like you're helping them, but that's not why I'm there. 'Cause I like dancing, and I like dancing with them. It's actually, it's like the same with any other sighted person as well. I don't feel like I'm dancing with a blind person.*

As an illustration of his egalitarian attitude towards all others, Matthew stated how he was unaware that his partner was partially sighted. The adoption of such an attitude served implicitly to perpetuate the idea, referred to by previous researchers, that partial sightedness is an invisible disability. For example, Matthew said, *"I knew it was a differently abled class. I just didn't realise the girl I was dancing with then was blind."*

The atmosphere in the Differently-abled Class appeared to be one of humour and light-heartedness. Most of the participants described how the visually impaired dancers responded well to jokes and light-hearted teasing about being blind. The question remains, however, as to what the function of such humour is in the context of an inclusive dance class. The use of humour is commonly known as a coping mechanism in many situations. In addition, it might be a way of helping to diffuse tension by making light of a serious situation. While this might be true for the members of the Differently-abled Class, such "disability" humour might be interpreted as a means by which the visually impaired dancers

attempted to reduce the social barriers between themselves and the sighted dancers. Sarah described the use of humour in the class as follows:

> *. . . funnily enough, we use it in the disabled class, we joke around with the guys and go, "Man, are you blind, can't you see?" [Laughs] . . . at first you would think that's so, like, insensitive, but they laugh about it . . . they make similar jokes. So, it's interesting how you can actually joke with them about such a simple saying as "Are you blind?"*

While some visually impaired and sighted dancers appeared to enjoy the use of "blind" humour in the Differently-abled Class, some sighted participants appeared to dislike this form of interaction. Some visually impaired dancers were reported to leave such sighted dancers with a feeling of discomfort when they made use of self-deprecating humour. Their experiencing of such feelings called into question whether such sighted dancers would, at times, rather use mechanisms of avoidance when they were faced with such seemingly harsh realities as visual impairment. Matthew described this conflict as follows:

> *It's just like, sometimes . . . the blind people start talking about themselves being blind. And it's just, like, this negative vibe then, suddenly, but it doesn't really happen all the time. It's just, for some reason, one of them would say some joke or something about them being blind, and then everything is just about how they are blind.*

The sighted participants stated why they enjoyed the Differently-abled Class, as well as their reasons for their appreciation of the visually impaired dancers, of the dance instructor, and of the formalised nature of ballroom dance. Despite the abilities of the visually impaired dancers being viewed favourably by the sighted dancers, the importance of their attempts to "normalise" their experiences with their visually impaired partners was still evident. For the sighted participants, the visually impaired dancers were considered to be the focus in the Differently-abled Class, rather than the dance classes being a setting in which both partners were on an equal footing. Having such a focal point, however, might have led the sighted participants to think that the visually impaired dancers were in need of charity. Conversely, there were instances in which the sighted participants displayed an attitude of equality, and a belief in the accessibility of dance to all. The reactions of the visually impaired dancers to jokes about being blind appeared to be a contentious issue for the sighted participants. While most of the participants acknowledged that the visually

impaired dancers were not sensitive to such jests, there were times when the jokes that were made by the visually impaired dancers, regarding their impairment, created tension in the class. The function of this interesting dynamic regarding the “disability” humour used in class was called into question.

6.2 Perceived benefits of participation in dance for sighted students

The sighted participants appeared to enjoy many benefits from their participation in dance that varied from their perceived benefits of dancing with a visually impaired partner. For this reason, the perceived benefits of dance for the sighted participants have been separated into the following two sub-sections: perceived benefits of dancing, and perceived benefits of participating in the Differently-abled Class.

6.2.1 Perceived benefits of dancing

The sighted participants reported many physical, social and psychological benefits from their participation in dance. Some sighted participants reported that dance was a full-body workout that increased their levels of fitness and stamina. Shaun said, for example:

> *It’s very sporty, but it’s got a lot of discipline . . . throughout dancing, then you learn that it’s also very good with exercise, ‘cause you use pretty much all your body muscles, your fingers, your toes, everything. . . . the jive everyone just wants to do one dance, ‘cause at the end of the song, we are all tired.*

Some sighted dancers stated how participating in ballroom and Latin American dance had improved their posture. For instance, James admitted, *“I used to slouch a lot when I sat [demonstrates a slouched seated position]. . . . I had bad posture, but ever since I started doing ballroom and Latin, I actually sit upright, and I walk upright.”*

From a social perspective, the participants reported that learning to dance had taught them a skill that helped them to interact more effectively with others at functions and events. For example, James acknowledged:

> *It's a good skill for everyone to have actually . . . wherever you go, whether you go, like, to a wedding, or a business function, you can, you know, show your stuff on the dance floor, because ballroom and Latin is everywhere.*

The participants reported having gained many psychological benefits from participating in dance. Dance appeared to be a context in which the students could relax, have fun and forget about their personal and academic stressors for a short while. Peter said, *"When I go to dance class, it's just me relaxing and having fun. . . . I just want to enjoy everything."* In addition, Sarah commented, *". . . dancing is my time to wind down. It's my time to forget about my work stress, my Master's stress, my personal life stress. I literally switch off at dancing and can just focus on dancing."*

James described how he used dance as a form of emotional release, in saying:

> *. . . you come to your dance class and then you, kind of, just leave it all behind, and you just dance your heart out. So, whether you're feeling sad or happy, and then all of that . . . comes through your dancing. . . . And they're kind of amplified when you're dancing. . . . you kind of deal with them a lot better when you're dancing, and after the dance is finished, when the music ends, you feel a lot lighter and happier. . . . with dance, everything kind of comes to the surface, and then you realise, um, what it is you're feeling.*

Some participants described dance as a means through which to express varied emotions in specific dances. Shaun, for example, said:

> *'Cause there's dances that . . . you need to be happy, you need to be very lively, and there's dances where, you need to, you know, put all your emotions into it. You must be toned down nicely. You must have the feeling of love. You need to express it, 'cause I've learned that dancing is not just about the moves that you get, or that they teach you. You need to understand the feel of the dance, and then you communicate the feel of the dance with the music.*

Through dance, some participants described having overcome feelings of self-consciousness. Matthew noted, for instance:

> *So, now, over, let's say, the first six months or in it, that just went away, and I'm just doing stuff, and even when other guys in my res [i.e. residence] look at, look at me and when I'm dancing in [name of shopping centre on campus], I don't really, I don't care what they think, I just do it. So that, maybe, made, gave me a mind shift . . . not [that] I don't care what people think about me, but I'm not ashamed to show what I love, do what I love.*

According to some of the dancers, participating in dance had increased their levels of self-confidence. Sarah, for example, said, *"I can be that overconfidence, that wouldn't be suited in the work place or something, you know. . . . Dancing really boosts the confidence in the person."*

Dance was considered by some participants to be a safe space in which to be who they were without having to fear being judged. Sarah noted, for example:

> *I suppose being able to be me. . . . People are different, and you realise that a lot more in dance, and you're accepting to that. People have their own style of dancing, so people aren't going to judge how you dance.*

The sighted participants appeared to enjoy the many physical, social and psychological benefits that they gained from dance. Most noticeable in terms of the benefits of dance that were described by the sighted dancers was the direct resemblance to the benefits that were reported by the visually impaired dancers. The similarity of the participants' reports in this regard, called into question whether the perceived benefits of dance are universal, regardless of a dancer's (dis)ability.

6.2.2 Perceived benefits from participating in the Differently-abled Class

The participants also reported many physical, social and psychological benefits from their participation in dance with a visually impaired partner. Some participants described dancing with their visually impaired partner as offering them a chance to focus on, and to improve, their basic dance technique which was forgotten when they were dancing at higher levels with a sighted partner. Peter said, for example:

> *And it's a much slower process, which is a good thing for me, 'cause then [name of dance instructor] will come to me and say, "[Name], you're doing this wrong." And,*

> *"[Name], focus on that now." . . . So, it actually helps me 'cause I can focus on more basic things, which I don't normally focus on, dancing with my own partner.*

Most of the participants reported that dancing with a visually impaired partner had improved their leading abilities. For instance, Matthew said:

> *. . . if I'm dancing with the beginners . . . you have to swap to a new partner the whole time, so then you realise that you don't know how to lead. The only reason why you and your, like, official partner is doing it correctly is because you know what each of you are going to do. So that's easy, but the moment you go dance with a blind person, now you're like, she can't just see what you're going to do. You have to lead her to do what you want her to do. . . . since I've been dancing with them, I've actually become much stronger as a leader.*

Learning to lead a visually impaired partner in dance appears to have helped some of the participants to lead their partners more effectively outside of the dance class. Matthew noted, for instance:

> *Well, sometimes I would walk [name of visually impaired dancer] back to her house, so I had to actually, like, learn [laughs], because the first time I walked with her, I was like, okay, she's just gonna, um, hold my arm and she's gonna follow. I didn't realise I had to, like actually, each bump in the road, I had to warn her about it. Because the first time, she almost fell [laughs]. I really felt bad about that.*

Participation in the Differently-abled Class appears to have had social benefits for the sighted dancers. It led to increased social interactions and connections. For example, Shaun said, *"Well, I didn't know any of them, but then now I know all of them, so you grow with them in the dancing, and you grow with them on campus."* In addition, Matthew noted:

> *. . . sometimes we go out together and I've been to a friend's birthday that they also went to, and, ja. It's nice being with them. . . . they're open, they speak, they're not shy. And, you know, of course they don't judge you . . . so I think you actually spend time with them more when I'm at a, let's say, a club or at the beach or a birthday than with the other people.*

James described how dancing with his visually impaired partner had taught him patience, compassion and empathy, which have transferred to his interactions with people in general:

> *. . . [I have] learned to be patient and, and considerate, and more sensitive, and that has carried through to when I interact with anybody, really. . . . I'm just a lot more respectful . . . a lot more open, a lot more, um, inviting to people, a lot more friendly in general.*

Some participants reported that they had become more aware of, and grateful for, their visual abilities since coming to know the daily challenges of their visually impaired peers. Peter said, for example, *". . . you realise, um, not how lucky you are, but just how much you take stuff for granted . . . basic things, just like, okay, I need to go to the kitchen now and do something."* James described how his perceptions of the world had been enriched through interacting with his visually impaired partner, which further resulted in an increased appreciation of his sight:

> *. . . it is something very enriching for me, and, um, it makes me look at the world in a different way, you know, look at it through different eyes, and appreciate, you know, the fact that I actually have sight. . . . also, the fact that, um, I have someone in my life who can, kind of, help me re-lay things a different way and then just, kind of, understand something from a different angle, than just by looking at it.*

Some participants described how dancing with a visually impaired partner had expanded their experience and knowledge of dance. Sarah, for example, said:

> *. . . being able to dance with different guys gives you a different experience. For me, dancing with [name of visually impaired partner] is just another dancing experience. . . . It's broadened my learning and my scope of dance.*

The participants highlighted many physical, social and psychological benefits to participating in dance with their visually impaired partners. Interaction with such dancers had led the participants to become more aware of, and grateful for, their visual abilities. Like their visually impaired partners, they also considered dance to have expanded their experience with, and knowledge of, dance.

6.3 Perceived challenges of sighted dancers

Like their visually impaired partners, the sighted participants reported experiencing a certain degree of hesitancy and anxiety in joining the Differently-abled Class, due to their fear of the unknown. For instance, James admitted, *"I didn't think that I would be able to do it, because I had no prior experience with working with them, or I didn't really have a differently abled friend, you know. So, I had no idea what to expect."*

For some of the participants, communicating with their visually impaired partner on the dance floor was considered to be a challenge. For example, Sarah said:

> *. . . to be on a competition floor where you are not supposed to talk, which is our only form of communication technically. . . . It was difficult, um, but we would then whisper with our mouths closed, where you just like "No, we are on the long side" and then go "Okay" and then, ja, try our best to, you know, get around again.*

The participants described some approaches that they had employed and signals that they had integrated to overcome their challenges with communication and navigation on the dance floor. For instance, Sarah noted, *"I squeeze his bicep, his arm, where I rest my arm. . . . him and I agreed, like that would be our signal for corners. So we, I don't have to always say 'Corner!'"*

In agreement with the reports of the visually impaired dancers, most of the sighted participants described the challenge that they had with forgetting that their visually impaired partner had an impairment, while neither wanting to infantilise, nor to offend, them. Sarah stated, for instance:

> *I sometimes forget that he is actually blind, which is funny. . . . They just, they make jokes about themselves, and they are so independent that you get to this point where you feel you are either oversensitive and running after them, or you completely forget and you just leave them, so it's very tricky to always make sure that you're, you know, behaving properly. . . . We all try and make sure that the dancers, when they come to classes, that they're comfortable and, but not "over-babied".*

Shaun said the following with regard to forgetting about his partner's impairment:

> *. . . it gets so comfortable that sometimes I forget that they don't see. . . . it's because, the way they portray themselves to me, it's like someone, you know, who is normal. There's no, you put the disability aside, and then you're just two normal people, and you have fun.*

Some of the sighted participants reported that they felt limited in the dance steps that they could perform with their visually impaired partner. The assumption appears to have been that they needed to be in constant physical contact. However, such a finding contrasts with the reports made by the visually impaired dancers who had experienced the performing of dance steps alongside their sighted partner. Matthew described his experience of having to be in constant contact with his visually impaired partner as follows:

> *Like, another partner you can sometimes be like, dance, um, like free, let's say, because there is those moves. But when you dance with a blind person, obviously you have to be in contact the whole time, so that they know where you are and what you're doing.*

Some of the participants reported that they felt limited by the need to match their visually impaired partner's style of dance in order for the partnership to progress. This perceived need to match their partner's style challenged some of the participants to overcome their need for perfection in the dance. Peter noted, for example:

> *And then you have your partner, which are not necessarily on that same level. Not that they [are] not good enough, it's just that they might not be able to do all their own gestures as perfectly as you want them to do it. . . . you have to, kind of, step back . . . so that you can look like a partnership and not necessarily dance differently, 'cause that's very important as well. . . . not to . . . try to please those people sitting there, with my steps or whatever I need to do.*

Dancing with a visually impaired partner as a new experience was equated with being "thrown in the deep end". It appears to have been seen as a challenge to which a dancer was either able to adapt to help the partnership thrive, or they would have to face the anxiety and the regret that would have been associated with them having let their partner down. Sarah described the situation as follows:

> *I think I have a bit more confidence when it comes to dancing than a beginner would. So it is easier to be thrown into a deep end sort of like that. . . . I think a beginner would be very hesitant, because they know what they know, whereas I, as an older dancer, can adjust to somebody, and I think you have to be able to do that.*

Some participants described feeling anxious due to the onus that was placed on them to help teach their visually impaired partners to learn to dance. Sarah said, for example, *". . . sometimes we have to, as a partner, help our partner, like teach them stuff. [Name of dance instructor] has a way of explaining things, but sometimes it isn't always clear to them."*

The above-mentioned responsibility appeared to be associated with gaining their visually impaired partner's trust. The sighted participants seem to have felt that they could not progress in dance if there was no trust in the partnership. For example, James noted, *". . . they have to rely a lot more on you, you know, not to let them get hurt or anything like this. . . . trust is also a vital, um, part of dancing with a [visually impaired] partner."*

In the opinion of some of the participants, their increased sense of responsibility in relation to their visually impaired partner created an imbalance in the power relations in the partnership. This power dynamic appears not to have been noted by the visually impaired dancers. For example, Shaun stated:

> *So, if I count wrong, they get it all wrong . . . but if my counting is right . . . we will get it right till the end, 'cause they're very sensitive. . . . If you tell them this is the timing, they will get it right. . . . but if I started dancing in the wrong side of the floor, where there's someone else next to us, they will be disturbed while dancing, and whose fault is it? It's not theirs. I can see. I know where I should have stood with them, so that I can lead them to the right direction, so that I don't bump into anyone. . . . Everything has to be on point, the technique, the moves, everything, the routine, 'cause you cannot mess up the routine when you can see.*

Like their visually impaired partners, the sighted participants reported the necessity of having small classes and of giving individual attention when teaching the visually impaired students to dance. For instance, Sarah said:

> *. . . she [i.e. the dance instructor] . . . can't, obviously, teach them the way she would teach a normal big group of thirty people. With the [visually impaired] guys, she has to go and . . . show them individually what to do. . . . when we were preparing now for the competition, [name of dance instructor] got them to come to the beginner's group . . . it was tough to manoeuvre around far more dancers.*

Some of the participants described how teaching their visually impaired partners the subtleties of the dance technique proved to be challenging. Working together with the dance instructor, the sighted participants reported how they approached this challenge by allowing the visually impaired dancers to feel the movement when it was demonstrated for them. Sarah noted, for example:

> *I try, or I know [name of dance instructor] as well, has tried to show them by feeling. . . . if you want to do, like, a side step, and [show] how your hips should move, [name of dance instructor] will take their hands and put it . . . on her hips, and move, and let them feel.*

Like their visually impaired partners, some sighted participants described a need for them to tolerate their own mistakes, and to accept criticism without subjecting themselves to self-blame. Sarah, for instance, observed:

> *. . . when you make a mistake, go "Oh, sorry, that was my fault" and accept that, you know. You can't criticise yourself all the time, and getting upset with yourself in dancing. It limits your ability to learn. . . . if you're not open to . . . taking criticism [and] laughing at yourself. . . . You are going to struggle, I think, maybe to dance with someone who isn't the same as you.*

A tension seems to have existed between the participants' desire to receive recognition for dancing with a visually impaired partner, while simultaneously feeling guilty for drawing attention to their partners' perceived need for special support. For example, Peter said:

> *I know it shouldn't be like that, but sometimes I feel like, that maybe I'm doing something good. . . . it's that whole dynamic of that [visually impaired] person doesn't want to feel, um, like you're feeling sorry for them, 'cause they just wanna dance, and they just wanna be a normal person. So, you don't wanna . . . feel like you want*

> *gratitude for what you're doing, you know. Sometimes you want it, I mean, I think it's human for you to think, "Look at what I'm doing. I'm dancing with this person."*

Some participants reported that they found it challenging to deal with their visually impaired partner's insecurities surrounding their disability. For instance, Shaun noted, *"But they're doing it well, and you tell them it's beautiful, but they don't believe you 'cause they can't see it."* Similarly, Peter said, *". . . she always felt like she wasn't good enough, always complained to me, 'I can't do this'. . . So I kind of had to step up and always, you know, tell her, 'No, you're fine. This is going to get better.'"*

For some participants, dancing with a visually impaired partner made them less patient and tolerant of sighted dancers who they believe take their visual abilities and the opportunity to dance for granted. For example, Sarah said:

> *. . . the fact that they take for granted how they have a coach in front of them who they can see what she is doing. They don't need to be explained and shown with their hands how their steps should be done, or how their hips should be moved. . . . The [sighted] guys on the dance floor can do it correctly with regards to direction, but they don't. . . . Our [visually impaired] guys don't have that ability, that chance to see things . . . I try not to get frustrated with them [i.e. sighted dancers], because I was the same probably. . . . But then you [also] get kids sitting in [dance] class and they [are] looking out the window, and you're, kinda like, "Really? You have this opportunity to learn from an amazing woman, but you're, you're here, but you're not here."*

Some sighted participants called into question the commitment of the visually impaired dancers to attending class, while some visually impaired dancers stated that they had competing demands on their time that prevented their sustained participation in the class. As a result, the progress of their partnership was seen to be hindered. Shaun said, for example:

> *. . . they need to be in the Braille office, 'cause they need to go and, you know, get busy with a book and change their notes to, so that they can read. . . . So, at times, we get there and they are not there. . . . that's the only thing that I didn't like. . . . I dance today, and next week we need to recap on what we did today. So if you [are]*

> *not there, that means when you come back, we [have to] start again. There is a great need for you to be consistent.*

In agreement with the visually impaired partners, some sighted participants considered the pace of the class to be too slow, which could create feelings of boredom and frustration. Peter noted, for instance:

> *. . . because of the way [name of dance instructor] is teaching you, your progress are a bit slower, cause you keep going over and over the same thing. . . . it's different dancing with your normal partner, 'cause [name of dance instructor] just gives you steps and then you must go and practise it.*

As a result of the above, some sighted participants felt that the motivation of the visually impaired dancers to consistently attend class might have fluctuated. Shaun said, for example:

> *. . . the problem I would say with commitment and with [name of dance society], there is only one competition that they compete in. . . . throughout the year, you know, everything is so slow. . . . But then closer to the time, then things start getting very, you know, edgy, and you need to be there all the time. . . . It's unlike, say, my level. Every week we get new moves. . . . with them [i.e. the visually impaired dancers], you need to do one and the same thing all over again, especially when they're starting. . . Give me something more to be excited about, and if I don't have that, you can't expect me to love dancing as much.*

Most of the participants appeared to feel that it was unfair to the visually impaired dancers that they could not be accommodated in the other classes. The society's policy was reported to be that a dancer may attend any class, as long as they could fall in line with the other dancers without disrupting the class. The participants acknowledged that doing so was problematic for the visually impaired dancers, due to the unique way in which they learned to dance. Sarah, for instance, noted:

> *. . . our other dancers are able to come and fill in into the other classes. If you can cope with a class, you're allowed to join a class. That's, kind of, the general rule, whereas for the differently abled it's not as easy, because the style of doing, teaching classes, is different. It wouldn't be accommodating to them. And also*

> *considering that myself and the others are always dancing with other people, and we're always helping other couples, we wouldn't be able to give them our full time like we can when we have an hour alone.*

Some of the sighted participants reported their dislike of the class being used by other members of the society to practise for events and functions, as a result of the small number of dancers in the Differently-abled Class. Such a finding is in agreement with the reports made by the visually impaired dancers. James said, for example:

> *. . . because we have so few members, it sometimes gets taken over by other people. Like, um, if we have people who need to practise for a performance. Then the first class that they'd think of coming to, to have some dance space, have the music, is the Differently-abled Class, 'cause then they feel like they wouldn't be taking anything away. . . . we only, at the moment, have, like, three people, three or four people that come to the class. So, it's, kind of, like, there's a lot more space, and . . . our coach can focus more on other people in that time slot . . . but, for me, that is not really right, because, I mean, that time and space is booked for our differently abled. All our efforts should be just on them.*

Not only did the sharing of space distract the instructor from what would otherwise be her sole focus on the visually impaired dancers' performance, but according to James, it also hindered their progress, as they could only perform the specific dances that the visitors needed to practise. He stated:

> *. . . because there's this function happening on Saturday, and some of our dancers are performing, now they come and practise in the Differently-abled Class. And because their dance is a specific dance, it's the rumba, that music gets played the whole time. Now [name of visually impaired partner] is forced just to dance rumba for that whole hour. Whereas, if all the attention was just on her and the other differently abled dancers, we could have done a lot more in that hour.*

All the sighted participants, in agreement with the visually impaired dancers, stated that they would encourage visually impaired students to join the Differently-abled Class because they felt that it would be a good experience; however, some participants also reported how the dance society struggled to attract visually impaired students to the class. Sarah said, for example, *"I think our disabled group, or differently abled group could*

definitely grow. I think it's just, it's how to attract them and then to find them partners is the trickier part, and I think that's why it has always stayed small."

The stigma attached to the Differently-abled Class is described by some participants as creating a barrier between this class and the rest of the society. Shaun seemed to feel that the abled and visually impaired dancers should be in one class, in order to remove the preconceptions held about visually impaired dancers being different and slow. He said:

> *Maybe we remove that stigma and say it's a dance class, you know, for people to dance in it, blind or not blind. You teach everyone at the same time. . . . I know that a lot of [sighted] people don't come to the class 'cause it's the disabled people class, but they don't understand that you can learn from the disabled people. The fact that they can't see, or they can't walk, or they can't do anything, doesn't mean that they cannot teach you something.*

From a social perspective, becoming friends with the visually impaired dancers appeared to create logistical challenges when interacting outside of the dance class. The participants described how they felt a responsibility to take care of and to protect their visually impaired peers when out in public. Shaun, for example, noted:

> *I think you have to meditate on your social life with them before you, you know, you get to do it, 'cause I cannot just take a blind person to [name of dance club], and then just leave them there. I need to be responsible. . . . you can't go with just the two of you. Maybe you need a third person, just in case you need to go to the bathroom, or do something else. You can't leave them with strangers. . . . What will be the consequences if something goes wrong?*

It is clear that the sighted participants faced many challenges of a physical, psychological and social nature when dancing with visually impaired partners, as well as when interacting with their visually impaired peers outside of the dance class. The dance society, and more specifically the members of the Differently-abled Class, appear to have employed many varied strategies in order to address such issues.

6.4 Challenging and changing preconceptions of visually impaired students

Interacting with the visually impaired dancers was reported to have challenged the sighted participants' stereotypical perceptions of people with disabilities as being different. For example, Sarah said, *"I don't really see such a difference always with them, with the differently abled as I do with the abled, which is nice, because it brings them back to being, they're just people. Instead of always being classified as something different."*

Shaun seemed to show surprise at learning that the visually impaired dancers were *"nice people"* when he said, *". . . and they're like, they're nice people, and, you know, I think I learn a lot."* It appears that through contact and interaction with his visually impaired peers, Shaun's perceptions of such people had been challenged and changed.

According to some participants, their knowledge of the daily processes of visually impaired individuals has expanded through their interactions in the Differently-abled Class. This had led to a change in their preconceptions regarding the capabilities of visually impaired people. Sarah observed, for instance:

> *I've tried to understand them more, you know, simple little things like, how does the guide dog work? Things that I would never have thought about before. . . . I feel I can ask the [visually impaired] guys now. . . . What's the difference between walking with a cane and walking with a dog? . . . their experiences of that. . . . It opens your mind up to people around you.*

James seemed surprised by the conversations that he was able to have with his visually impaired partner, which had also changed his preconceptions regarding how he could interact with, and relate to, people with disabilities. He said:

> *. . . she loves series and movies . . . she obviously can't, like, see it, but she listens . . . the visually impairment thing is not a barrier at all. You know, it doesn't like hinder anything in our conversations. . . . I never thought I could discuss visual things with a blind person.*

Appreciation was shown for the "normalised" interactions that the dance instructor had with the visually impaired dancers. This appeared to have changed the sighted participants'

perceptions of, and attitudes toward, the visually impaired students as being fragile and as needing to be handled with care. Sarah stated, for example:

> *I like how [name of dance instructor] interacts with them. She also, she teases them and we joke with them. . . . you're always afraid that when you're dealing with people who are different in that way, blind, that maybe . . . in her class, there would be this tension of treating them differently, but she doesn't. How she treats them, teasing them, is what she would say to any of us, and I enjoy seeing that.*

Some participants spoke about how they had learned to look past their initial inability to see their visually impaired partner as a unique entity. It appears as if some of the participants initially saw only "blindness", but through ongoing contact and interaction with the visually impaired dancers, they began to look beyond the impairment and started to see all the other characteristics of the individual. Shaun noted, for instance:

> *. . . she understands it, she feels it, she, like she puts away all her, all the disabilities, and then she becomes a normal person, like you wouldn't know that [name of visually impaired dancer] is blind if she wasn't with [name of guide dog].*

The sighted participants' preconceptions of visual impairment appear to have been challenged and changed through their contact and interaction with the visually impaired dancers. Learning of the daily processes of the visually impaired students seems to have contributed to the shifting of such perceptions.

6.5 Sighted participants' admiration and idealisation of visually impaired individuals

Most of the participants reported that they saw the visually impaired dancers as inspirational. In this way, the visually impaired dancers appear to have been seen as heroes for their ability to overcome the various challenges that they had to encounter on a daily basis. Sarah noted, for instance:

> *I watch the guys through campus and always are amazed at how they get around. . . . I used to go and sit and watch those [visually impaired] guys . . . it humbles you as a dancer, and gives you inspiration to carry on.*

Matthew described how he was filled with admiration and empathy when he realised the extent of a visually impaired dancer's abilities. His views bordered on the admiration and idealization of individuals with such impairments. Matthew said:

> *So, sometimes, in my room, I would close my eyes and then try and see if I would be able to move around . . . and I'm like, nope. So, I'm quite, actually, amazed sometimes. I admire them. How they are able to do the things they do, and especially dancing. The first time I saw, I'm like, "Wow!"*

While most of the sighted participants showed admiration for their visually impaired counterparts, the attitude taken appears to have led to certain generalisations being made regarding the existence of visually impaired people as a homogenous group. This negated the visually impaired person's sense of autonomy and spoke of a stereotypical "single story" of visual impairment. James observed, for instance:

> *I think they, because of their impairment, they push themselves a lot harder. And they strive for excellence in other areas. More so than what we do. We, like, I would say that many of us, kind of, just skate through life. Not realising our blessings. . . . But, because they have that missing in their own lives, they have sight missing, that pushes them to, you know, really get the most out of all other areas in their lives.*

The sighted participants appear to have held the visually impaired dancers in high regard, in saying that the latter were an inspiration to them. While displaying empathy and compassion for their unsighted peers might have been beneficial to both parties, the idealisation of the visually impaired dancers could have had adverse effects. For example, their idealisation might have led to the individual needs of visually impaired people being overlooked due to an excessive focus being placed on the admiration expressed. Furthermore, if visually impaired individuals are only viewed through a lens of admiration and idealisation, they run the risk of losing their sense of "humanness", and their relatability to their sighted peers. This might lead to further unrealistic stereotyping, and to a disregard for the visually impaired individual's vast and varied emotional experience of personhood.

6.6 Heteronormativity and traditional gender roles in partnered dance

The participants described how traditional gender roles are upheld in partnered dance. They appeared to feel, however, that whereas an inclusive partnership strove to maintain such customs, adjustments needed to be made in order for them to be able to portray their gendered role successfully. For example, James said:

> *. . . it's just socially and traditionally expected that the male leads, because that's how dance is structured. . . . it gets tricky when there is a visually impaired person involved, especially if that person is the male. If it's the female, then it's not that difficult.*

Sarah spoke of the traditionally male role taken in leading a partner:

> *. . . it's completely different than dancing with an abled male, um, because as a female in Latin and ballroom, we follow. . . . we know our stuff obviously, yes, but we follow completely. The guy does what he wants.*

From the participants' reports, being a visually impaired female dancer was seen as being advantageous in relation to the position of a visually impaired male dancer because it was perceived that the female role was easier to fulfil in such a context than was the male role. On this point, Sarah said:

> *. . . within our Differently-abled Class . . . [name of visually impaired partner] is the only male, so the females in our class have the, almost have the advantage, 'cause their able-bodied partner is the male who leads anyway.*

Sarah described the sense of anxiety that was produced by her not knowing what her role was as the female in an unconventional dance partnership. She appeared to feel that the support that she received from the dance instructor assisted her in overcoming this anxiety. She said:

> *We get so used to relying on the guy . . . but now I know that I have to do some more part in this partnership than I would normally. So I think I was a bit nervous in the beginning, but because [name of dance instructor] was there . . . and tells me what I'm supposed to do, then it's fine [laughs].*

Sarah described how she worked with her visually impaired partner to overcome the perceived limitations of his impairment, and to create the illusion of expected gender roles:

> *. . . we stick to a routine, just because then it's easier that we both know what's coming, and then it helps better with my leading, but, 'cause he is also leading at the same time. . . So he goes in a direction, and then I have to counter that, so that we stay in our . . . "dance lines". . . . So it requires a lot of strength as well, and also for him to give up that, you know, that leading, 'cause he is the man, he is supposed to lead.*

The partners in an inclusive partnership were reported to show respect and appreciation for each other and for the dance in a similar gendered way as did the able-bodied partners. Sarah described this convention as follows:

> *. . . in an able-bodied partnership, our gent always turns the lady [at the end of the dance] and thanks her, and you thank your partner, and um, but [name of visually impaired partner] actually does that with me as well. He turns me and I curtsy for him. . . . it's nice that him and I still do that, even though he can't see that I am showing my appreciation, but I think he can feel when my arm drops 'cause I curtsy.*

Sarah had reportedly gained respect and appreciation for the difficulty of the male role in dance, as a result of her dual role as co-leader in the inclusive partnership. She said:

> *. . . now I have to learn it in really knowing direction and leading, whereas before I'll just learn my step, and not have to worry about any of that. I said to the male dancers, "I take my hat off to you guys now, 'cause leading is hard." [Laughs].*

Some participants described how conventional gender roles are upheld in terms of clothing when performing with a visually impaired partner. Shaun, for example, noted:

> *. . . I can help her to show her, "Okay, you need to do, put on make-up to look, you know, classy and very lady-like, 'cause now we, I'm gonna be the guy and you're gonna be the lady, so we need to see the difference on the dance floor." And then, you know, you bring in all the other factors, and then you make it one big, beautiful thing.*

In contrast, some of the participants reported that, while they tried to maintain the traditions associated with the stereotypical gender roles, their partner's visual impairment became the main focus of attention. For instance, Sarah said:

> *We always have this joke of the lady is the picture, the guy is the frame. The guy is supposed to show off his lady. But in, and in differently abled dancing with [name of visually impaired partner] that's still the idea, I just don't, they're the focus for me.*

In line with the visually impaired participants' reports, the sighted participants also stated how conventional gender roles were strongly engrained within the world of dance. While such expectations seemed to become more of a challenge in an inclusive partnership, both partners appeared to feel the need to employ strategies to portray the illusion of gender conventions as best they could.

6.7 Sighted dancers' perceptions on the issue of inclusion

The participants reported that the dance society was the most diverse and inclusive society on campus. Peter said, for example, "*. . . we are, I think, the most diverse society on campus, 'cause not only do we cater for normal students, we cater for the differently abled. We cater for adults, basically the whole [name of area] community."*

Most of the participants spoke of inclusion in terms of the accommodation that was made at social events to which all of the dancers were invited. The dance committee seems to have believed that, by including the visually impaired dancers in society events and functions, they were encouraging a spirit of inclusion among the members of the society. Sarah, for instance, noted:

> *. . . we try and include them, you know, especially those of us that are partnered with someone. Then we're much more inclined to be like, "Come guys, we're going out. We're going to have a braai, or something. Come along." And then when they are there, everyone is very accommodating. . . . We try and make them feel like they're at least part of the group.*

Similarly, Peter observed:

> *. . . we have our socials and we have our workshops, we, it is open for everyone. . . . I think everyone has the chance to do it, so they have no excuses to feel excluded, even our differently abled people.*

Like the visually impaired dancers, the sighted participants spoke of inclusion in terms of the giving and receiving of support among all the dancers. They acknowledged that they fell short in this area, and that they were aware of the need to better integrate the dancers at competitions and in class, as well as at social functions. For example, Peter noted:

> *. . . as being a part of this whole dancing experience, I feel like they should get more recognition for it, in a sense. Especially with that competition, so, and I feel that's something they don't get from the rest of our members even. Like, I mean, every year we advertise this competition, "Come watch our differently abled dancers dance!" And then there's just no interest. . . . But it's something so big for them. . . . I feel like there's more that we can do in that sense.*

Some participants reported a lack of awareness of the Differently-abled Class in the rest of the society that hindered attempts at integration. Sarah said, for example:

> *. . . we pick them up before class, we bring them to dancing, we take them back. Most, I think half our society doesn't even know that we do that sort of stuff for these guys, or that, actually, I don't even think half our society knows we have a Differently-abled Class. They all just know they don't dance at five o'clock on a Tuesday.*

Most of the participants described how they felt privileged to have the chance to dance with a visually impaired partner. Attached to this feeling, it appears as though the dance instructor had implicitly validated that they were "good enough" and "special enough" to dance with a partner who was in need of special attention. This "invitation" to partner a visually impaired dancer appears to have been regarded as a special privilege that was bestowed by the dance instructor, rather than the class being open to anyone willing to participate. Furthermore, the perceptions regarding the exclusive nature of the class might have acted as a barrier between the visually impaired and the sighted dancers. For instance, Sarah noted:

> *. . . it's a privilege to have been asked to dance with [name of visually impaired partner]. . . . With [name of dance instructor], it's always, if you're asked to do something, it's "okay, she can see that you can do this".*

Some participants stated that they found it difficult to integrate all the dancers, and to create an inclusive environment in the society. They acknowledged a tension between having to be sensitive towards the visually impaired dancers and having not to be too aggressive in their approach with the sighted dancers, so as to achieve awareness and inclusivity. Sarah, for example, said:

> *. . . it's a tricky thing to do without almost offending or upsetting people, or feeling like you're being pushy about the disabled dancers. Ja, so, we've just got to find the right kind of way to get the abled students to be a bit more conscious of everyone else around them, their fellow dancers, abled and disabled. . . . we need to find a little trick way to, like, trigger this in other people.*

Sarah suggested one way in which to encourage dancers within the society to interact and integrate with one another:

> *[I] would like them [i.e. the visually impaired dancers] to have another hour where they could dance, but somewhere where it would be, like, slap bang in between, like, beginner and intermediate class, so the guys that are, like, ending and starting would see these [visually impaired] guys more. So, more of a, like, "Hey, stick around for an hour to see what these guys are doing!"*

While the inclusion and the integration of dancers with varying abilities appears to have been of great importance to the sighted participants, they acknowledged many ways in which they had not, as yet, been able to achieve such a goal.

6.8 Conclusion

It appears that the sighted participants, like the visually impaired dancers, received many benefits from participating in dance. Furthermore, the former participants seem to have experienced many benefits from dancing with a visually impaired partner. Their participation had also resulted in the creation of many challenges for them to overcome. Through their contact and interactions with the visually impaired dancers, the sighted

participants' preconceptions and prejudices of people with disabilities seem to have been challenged and changed. This interaction appears, however, to have also created feelings of admiration and perceptions of idealisation with regard to the visually impaired dancers. The heteronormative nature of gender roles were reported by the sighted participants as being prominent in the world of ballroom and Latin American dance. Inclusion and accessibility appeared to be further issues of contention among the abled and visually impaired dancers in the dance society investigated in this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN
DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I offer a discussion of five key aspects of the findings that would be likely to benefit from further reflection. Firstly, the issues of representation are explained, taking into consideration the expectation of sameness and performance of sightedness as well as the nature of gender roles in partnered dance. Next, the concerns of inclusion and accessibility in the Differently-abled Class are brought into awareness. The coverage includes a breakdown of the physical and social factors that play a role in the given situation. Following this, insights into the world of disability are offered. The benefits of participation in partnered dance for visually impaired dancers are then discussed, leading on to a consideration of the benefits for their sighted partners.

7.2 Issues of representation

People with disabilities are often represented as a single, homogenous group, being considered to be a counterpart to those with “normal” bodies, regardless of the nature of either their impairment or their personal characteristics (Garland-Thomson, 1997; Monbeck, 1973). Such representation tends to reduce the nature of the individual to that of a common identity, rather than encouraging each individual to be regarded holistically as a complex, unique human being. Garland-Thomson (1997) writes: “Perhaps most destructive to the potential for continuing relations is the normate’s frequent assumption that a disability cancels out other qualities, reducing the complex person to a single attribute” (p. 68).

From the findings that have been made in this study, it appears that dance might be a context in which visually impaired participants can express themselves in an individualised, unique manner, while navigating expectations of sameness and sightedness. Such expression also encourages a breakdown of certain stereotypes, as well as offering a medium in which dancers with disabilities can explore traditional gender roles. This challenges societal (mis)representations of disability, and of those who live a life of difference.

7.2.1 The expectation of sameness and the performance of sightedness

Disability and impairment tend to be described in terms of difference from the "norm" or "ideal" experience of embodiment. Kuppers (2003) sums up this type of describing eloquently: "The history of the representation of disability and illness can be seen to be structured by attempts to contain the Other, to isolate it, present it outside 'normal' society and bodies, and thus to exorcise its threatening, disruptive potential" (p. 4). Davis (1995) frames this issue as "normalcy", being a social construction that has created the "problem" of people with disabilities, rather than that of people with disabilities being the "problem". Additionally, Kuppers (2003) states that in many social settings the status quo is threatened by the presence of an impaired individual. Therefore, in order to remain invisible in society, people with disabilities seem to feel the need to create the illusion of sameness to those who are classified as "normal".

There is evidence of the above in the current study, in which most sighted participants spoke of wanting to "normalise" the dance experience for their visually impaired partners. The sighted dancers described how they needed to match their partner's style of dance in order that they should appear technically and stylistically the same to audience members. It seems that if this similitude can be achieved, the likelihood of the impairment being disguised, and of the abilities of both partners being viewed favourably, is heightened. The desire of the sighted participants to try to "normalise" the dance experience for their visually impaired partners, however, appears to suggest that the sighted dancers are not comfortable with their partner's impairment. The sighted participants further seemed to suggest that the sighted audience members tend to expect the visually impaired dancers to appear "normal", or sighted. From the perspective of the visually impaired participants, the greatest compliment is to be considered sighted, confirming the expectation placed on them to appear as "normal" and inconspicuous as possible.

The above speaks to the outdated idea of "single stories" of disability. Rice et al. (2015) wrote about the (mis)representation of disability in society that lends itself to the misguided stereotyping of people with disabilities as a reflection of a single narrative of disability, rather than enabling them to be regarded as embodying a diverse, individualistic lived experience of difference. Rice et al. (2015) further describe the potential benefits that can be gleaned from the changing of perceptions of disability:

> When we engage with disability in ways that embrace complexity by bringing the margins to the centre, we open up space for representations that change our perceptions of disability, our perceptions of ourselves and our communities, and that even change our very bodies. (p. 524)

From the reports of the sighted dancers, it appears that they might, at least initially, have held a belief that all visually impaired people shared the same limitations and experiences. James, for example, stated how he did not realise the varied topics of conversation that he could have with visually impaired individuals; however, as a result of interacting with visually impaired people who were markedly different in personality, his image of such people changed. This suggests that James' focus shifted from the impairment concerned to the individual involved, broadening out from a single story of disability to a wider concept of the nature of difference. Whereas the sighted participants had shown progression from a "single story" of disability, it seems that they reverted back to the social stereotype at times when qualities of "normalisation" and "sameness" were expected in the context of dance.

7.2.2 Gender roles in partnered dance

Ballroom and Latin American dance are widely known as partnered dance forms that uphold conventional, heteronormative gender roles. In this way, the male partner is considered to be the leader, whereas the female dancer is described as the follower. The leader decides which steps will be performed in the dance as he guides the follower around the dance floor, and it is the responsibility of the follower to give up control and to allow the leader to lead (Schneider, 2013). While traditionally such roles have been viewed as active (dominant) for the leader and passive (submissive) for the follower, Beggan and Pruitt (2014) have found the relationship to evince a more complex power dynamic of interdependence.

Participants in the present study appeared to respect and reinforce the stereotypical gender conventions inherent in ballroom and Latin American dance by stating that the male leads and the female follows. Simultaneously, the female's role is regarded as being easier than that of the man because he is responsible for the steps that they take as well as for the direction in which they move on the dance floor, while the woman's focus is on following well, and on making her choreography pleasurable to watch. The dance society

that formed the context for the current study further served to reinforce the adoption of heteronormative gender conventions, in terms of employing partnerships consisting of a male and female dancer, as well as through the clothing that the participants were expected to wear at competitions. Jessica stated how she enjoys wearing “pretty dresses”, while her male partner is expected to wear a black-and-white suit. In this way, dance is considered by the female participants to be a form of activity through which they can, and are encouraged to, feel graceful and feminine. This appeared to be a unique experience for the visually impaired women concerned. Stephanie stated that dance allowed her to feel graceful in an otherwise “clumsy” body. Goodwin et al. (2004) found that the participants in their study also reported feeling beautiful and graceful when dancing.

Interesting to note was the lack of distinction between the views on gender roles in dance of the visually impaired and the sighted participants. In fact, the gendered roles and responsibilities of the dancers seemed to be so strongly entrenched in their collective experience that any form of impairment that threatened to disrupt this convention was considered as a challenge to overcome. Their intent was to bend the gendered rules slightly in order to make the partnership appear as though it did not disturb tradition. This desire for equanimity and maintenance of the existing status quo could be seen in Richard’s reports on the subtle cues and signals that he uses with his sighted partner to hide his visual impairment while they dance, so as to create the illusion that he is leading the couple. Sarah, too, spoke of needing to conceal the adaptations made in order to guide her visually impaired partner around the dance floor, which would, in the traditional context, be her partner’s responsibility.

The above contrasts with the moves made in other forms of non-gendered partnered dance, such as contact improvisation (Marchant et al., 2010; Paxton et al., 1993), in which both partners work together without being subject to the restriction of having to fulfil the expected roles of a specified leader and follower. The dance form mentioned does not conform to that of a typical partnership of one male and one female dancer. It can also be performed by two men or two women, with both partners being considered to be equally responsible for the formation and movement of the dance. It is less structured than ballroom and Latin American dance, and it is free from the confining structure of a limiting predetermined choreography. However, considering that all participants in the current study explicitly stated their enjoyment of the structure, and of the formalised moves, of

ballroom and Latin American dance, it follows that they would appreciate the structure and restrictions of gendered roles and regulations in dance.

7.3 Inclusion and accessibility

Disability, on a global level, is considered to be a human rights issue due to the exclusion of people with disabilities from everyday activities, as well as from healthcare, education and employment opportunities (World Health Organisation, 2011). The purpose of the World Disability Report was to promote participation, inclusion and accessibility for persons with disabilities. An implicit aim was to increase levels of awareness and education in regard to the daily challenges of people with disabilities, so as to be able to find solutions for their better integration in society than had previously been the case (World Health Organisation, 2011).

Many studies have been conducted to ascertain the physical, social and psychological facilitators and barriers existing in the realm of physical activity for people with disabilities (see Chapter Three). There is, however, little knowledge of dance classes for visually impaired individuals. With such limitations in mind, the physical and social factors affecting accessibility and inclusion for the visually impaired and sighted dancers in this study are discussed below.

7.3.1 Physical factors

Sherrill (2003) defines physical inclusion as “receiving instruction, and appropriate supports, in a common space” (p. 56) for people of varied levels of ability. The author found that physical inclusion is regulated and supported by law, as well as by administrative and instructional policies. Poor teacher preparation and inadequate financial support were described by Wegner and Struthers (2011) as being barriers to participation in sports for learners with disabilities in mainstream primary schools. In addition, Gross et al. (2013) discovered such environmental barriers as inadequate equipment and inaccessible fitness areas contributing towards the exclusion of people with disabilities in fitness centres.

None of the above-mentioned issues appears to have been a concern to the participants in this study. The visually impaired participants spoke highly of the dance instructor’s ability

to teach them, and showed appreciation for their sighted partners as secondary supports in the class. The same dancers acknowledged the need for accommodations to be made in their class, such as for it to be held at a slower pace and to provide for the giving of individual attention. Simultaneously, they showed appreciation for the dance society's efforts to make the Differently-abled Class as accessible and inclusive as possible.

The only physical barrier that appeared to impede the visually impaired dancers was their inability to attend any of the other classes that were offered by the society. The pace of the classes, the style of instruction and the number of dancers on the floor made the "normal" classes (as referred to by the participants) more of a challenge for the visually impaired dancers to attend than they were for the sighted participants. As a result, the visually impaired dancers were limited to attending only one class per week, namely the Differently-abled Class, which they felt was inadequate. The sighted participants agreed that the "normal" classes were inaccessible to the visually impaired dancers as a result of their pace, their style of instruction and the high attendance figures for dancers in the classes. The sighted dancers also stated that they could not give the visually impaired dancers their full attention in the "normal" classes because they needed to devote that time to other, less experienced sighted dancers. All of the participants seem to have felt that the separation of classes created a barrier between the visually impaired dancers and the other members of the dance society.

Shields et al. (2011) identify a lack of transport as being a barrier for children with disabilities to access physical education. In the current study, the sighted participants described how they eradicated this barrier by driving the visually impaired dancers to and from the dance class in order to encourage their participation. In light of this effort, the sighted participants expressed their belief that they had taken the initiative to accommodate the visually impaired dancers in every way possible, from collecting the visually impaired dancers before the class, to accommodating them during the class, as well as in providing them with transport home after class. Thus, the sighted participants appeared to feel that the visually impaired dancers should have no reason to experience any form of physical exclusion from participating in the dance classes.

The national prevalence rate of disability in South Africa is 7.5%, with 11.0% of people over the age of five years having a visual impairment (Stats SA profiles persons with disabilities, 2014). According to Notice 178 of 2015, which gave notice of a Draft White

Paper on the Police and a Draft White Paper on Safety and Security (2015) that were consulted on by the Civilian Secretariat of Police in South Africa, persons with disabilities are “1.5 times more likely to be a victim of violence” (p. 12). Persons with disabilities are, therefore, particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of crime in the current South African climate. Such a situation makes it unsafe for visually impaired students to walk to evening dance classes in the dark, thus creating a barrier to inclusion if they are unable to make use of the transport provided for them.

7.3.2 Social factors

The focus of the dance society in this study is not only on teaching students how to dance. According to the sighted dancers, the dance society considers itself to be a social society and, in line with its social agenda, aims to provide a social experience for its members. The dance society, therefore, hosts many events and functions throughout the year in which all members, both abled and impaired, can interact and socialise. The sighted participants stated that it was their hope that this form of casual interaction would promote integration between the dancers, regardless of their (dis)ability.

The visually impaired dancers acknowledged and appreciated the attempts of the dance committee to include them in all social events held by the society. This interaction and relationship-building did not, however, appear to translate into the provision of support at competitions. It is at such competitions that, according to both the visually impaired and the sighted participants, the principle of inclusion is not sustained. As a result, the visually impaired dancers stated that they felt that they did not know many other dancers in the society. This contradicts the explicit statements made by the sighted participants that the society had been successful in socially integrating all members. Sherrill (2003) describes social inclusion to be the meaningful, satisfying, socially connected interaction between people with and without disabilities which contributes to the leading of an active, healthy lifestyle by all involved. From the participants’ reports, it appears that the visually impaired and the sighted dancers had differing views on how successful the dance society had been in achieving such meaningful integration.

While inclusion was a point of contention between the visually impaired and the sighted dancers, solutions were offered in order to increase the levels of integration in the dance society. Rachel, a visually impaired dancer, suggested that the dance society should

continue to hold the Differently-abled Class separately to the rest of the classes, so that the visually impaired dancers could receive the time and attention they required for learning new moves and techniques. She stated, however, that she would have liked to be able to attend the beginner's class in order to practise the skills and moves that she had learned in the Differently-abled Class. The greatest concern of the sighted partners with this solution was that they would not be able to give all their attention to the visually impaired dancers in the mixed classes. The visually impaired dancers would, therefore, need to feel comfortable when dancing with multiple partners.

Sarah, a sighted dancer, stated that she would have liked the Differently-abled Class to be placed between two of the classes for sighted dancers. In this way, the sighted dancers would have more of a chance to interact with the visually impaired dancers when arriving at and leaving class. Not only would such timing of the classes encourage interaction between the sighted and the visually impaired dancers, but it would further increase the levels of awareness of the Differently-abled Class among the rest of the society. Sarah disapproved of the lack of awareness surrounding the visually impaired dancers in the society, and asserted that if there was to have been increased interaction and integration of all dancers when at the studio, the likelihood of support at competitions would have been higher than it was at the time of the study.

7.4 Insights into the world of disability

The visually impaired participants brought a sense of awareness to the challenges that they faced in connection with dance as a result of their limited visual abilities. Learning to trust and to surrender control, and, ultimately, learning to depend on their sighted partner, appeared to be particularly difficult for some visually impaired participants. In order to establish an effective, comfortable partnership, it is vital for the visually impaired dancer to trust their sighted partner. Richard stated how his partner became his eyes on the dance floor. The participants described their experiences of losing their eyesight over a period of time, and their need to adjust accordingly. As a result of the degenerative nature of their impairments, the visually impaired dancers sometimes have little faith in their own vision. It becomes easier to comprehend that the visually impaired participants might struggle to trust another person's vision to protect them on the dance floor and to navigate the partnership successfully through the dance. Stephanie and Jessica spoke of needing to place trust in their partner, whether or not they wanted to. This suggests that feelings of

anxiety and vulnerability are associated with the issues with trust that the visually impaired participants have.

For the visually impaired dancers, placing a sense of trust in their partner extended beyond having to cope with factors of safety and collision avoidance on the dance floor. The need to trust their sighted partner to give open and honest feedback regarding their movements and how they looked on the dance floor was of equal importance to the visually impaired participants. Rachel spoke of her struggle to believe her partner when he told her that she looked good. Her fear was that people would say what they thought she needed to hear in order to boost her self-confidence, rather than state what they felt would genuinely help her to improve. Richard described the value of receiving honest feedback in terms of mastery and overcoming insecurities surrounding his movements. This type of feedback, therefore, has both physical and psychological implications.

Monbeck (1973) writes, ". . . we can see that blindness symbolises a loss of power, of individual creativity, of control" (p. 142). This speaks to the sense of vulnerability experienced by visually impaired individuals as a result of their perceived loss of power and control to their sighted counterparts. Reeve (2006) speaks of the vulnerability experienced by people with disabilities in terms of their psycho-emotional well-being. According to Reeve (2006), people with disabilities are more susceptible to feelings of low self-worth as a result of the perceived loss of their power and a dependence on able-bodied people. In this respect, the dance class appears to be a microcosm of the universal experience of disability. The Differently-abled Class, however, also appears to have been a context through which the participants could explore their own insecurities and vulnerabilities within the safe boundaries and structure of the dance movements, as well as within their inclusive partnership. Richard described how, through dance, he has learned to become less concerned about his movements and how he looks. In addition, Jessica explained how she had come to feel safer with her dance partner when out in public, as she had learned to trust him to the extent that she knew he would protect her. Stephanie stated how she would prefer her dance partner to cross a road with her, as in addition to him having learned how to lead her effectively, she had also learned to give up control, and to trust his lead.

A second challenge faced by the visually impaired dancers was that of having to cope with other people's intrusions into their personal space. Richard explained that it was relatively

easy for a visually impaired person to keep others at a physical distance so as to protect themselves from that which they could not see. In his opinion, most visually impaired individuals have strict personal space boundaries. However, partnered dance by its very nature is so intimate that it forces the dancer to allow themselves to be touched by their sighted partner as well as by the dance instructor. Due to the visually impaired dancers' inability to watch the instructor and imitate her movements, the former have to be taught how to dance by making use of verbal explanation in conjunction with physical touch. The participants stated that personal space is so important to visually impaired people, in fact, that they would strongly recommend some of their visually impaired friends not to participate in dance because they thought that it would invoke unbearable feelings of discomfort in them.

The concern of interpersonal space is an intriguing one, however, as Sanders and Suydam (1980) found no significant difference between visually impaired and sighted participants in matters of personal space. These findings are echoed by Hayduk and Mainprize (1980) who conducted spatial experiments with "blind", "partially sighted" and sighted participants. A number of reasons exist for the discrepancy between the findings that were made in the two aforementioned studies in comparison with those that were made in the current study. Firstly, issues of culture and nationality could play a part in the distinction noted, as the previous studies were conducted in America and Canada, respectively, while the current study was carried out in South Africa. Secondly, a great deal of time lapsed between the previous studies and the current one. Such issues as population increases and a rise in the crime rate, for instance, could account for the difference. Thirdly, the use of a controlled test environment with relatively little movement, besides that of a single researcher, might have produced results different to those that were obtained where there was a perceived need for greater personal space within the environs of a busy dance class that was characterised by the presence of much movement and a multitude of sounds. Ultimately, tests for interpersonal space require conducting on a sample that is similar to that which was available in the current study to enable discerning whether visually impaired participants' desire for personal space is greater or of more importance to them than is the need for such space among sighted dancers. The perceived need for a "personal bubble" can, however, create feelings of discomfort or vulnerability if the barrier concerned is breached without the permission of the individuals involved.

In the case of the current study, the challenges that were experienced with interpersonal space were thought by the visually impaired participants to have been confronted and rectified through their experiences in the dance class. While such a device was still viewed as being a form of protective mechanism, the visually impaired dancers stated that they had learned to become more flexible about whom they allowed into their "personal bubble". Richard, for example, described how the dancers (both abled and disabled) were more prone to enter other dancers' personal space in social settings. The context pertaining in this instance suggests that less discomfort was experienced with the issue of spatial permeability than was initially stated. Due to the corrective emotional experiences described by the visually impaired participants, dance can be seen as a context through which challenges of trust, control, dependency, and interpersonal space can be exposed, confronted and overcome. In this way, inclusive social ballroom dance may be considered as a potential therapeutic setting for visually impaired participants.

7.5 Benefits of participation for the visually impaired students

Lourens' (2015) study which was conducted in South Africa found that there was a complex dynamic in the social interactions that occurred between visually impaired and sighted students in higher education. Some visually impaired students felt the need to conceal their impairment in order to make others feel more comfortable in their presence, whereas other individuals with the same impairment used the stares of others to "become known" (p. 200). Garland-Thomson (2009) explains the feeling of discomfort as being the result of "the social illegibility of the disabled body" (p. 38). Byrne (2014) conducted a study in Belfast, Ireland in which it was found that some participants would try to hide their impairment from their peers for fear of being socially isolated and excluded. While this dynamic appeared to be consistent with the participants in the current study, a distinction can be seen between the "blind" and "partially sighted" dancers. For example, the partially sighted dancer, Stephanie, stated how she was initially hesitant to join the Differently-abled Class for fear of her academic peers becoming aware of her participation in the class and, as a result, learning of her impairment. Conversely, the blind dancers appeared to be open about their impairments and limitations. Through the medium of dance, the visually impaired dancers were given the opportunity to redefine this dynamic. Rather than solely focusing on their impairment, they offered nondisabled observers the chance to witness their embodied movements and expressions. As a result, the visually impaired

dancers benefitted from gaining a deeper understanding and redefinition of their own bodies, abilities and limitations.

The anxiety expressed by Stephanie in relation to her being recognised as disabled by her academic peers suggests that she was initially fearful of being ostracised or socially excluded on campus. In short, she was afraid that the nondisabled students would focus on her difference and on what she was unable to do, rather than on her capabilities. This finding is in agreement with other studies that have been done by a variety of researchers (see Elliot & Wilson, 2008; Kranke, Jackson, Taylor, Anderson-Fye & Floersch, 2013; Low, 1996; Magnus & Tøssebro, 2013; Roberts, Georgeson & Kelly, 2009), in which the participants were found to fear social exclusion if their impairment was discovered.

The Differently-abled Class gave the visually impaired students a medium through which to showcase their abilities. This experience had the bonus effect of changing the way in which the visually impaired participants were perceived by the able-bodied people with whom they came into contact. When the visually impaired participants spoke of their dance experience in terms of social settings, they described how the initial reaction they received was people asking them how they could dance if they could not see. This interaction allowed the visually impaired participants an opportunity to educate others whose perspectives they could shift by means of engaging in dialogue from a “can’t see, can’t dance” viewpoint to one that was characterised by a “can’t see, can dance” understanding of their abilities.

A second factor also found by Lourens (2015), was that the visually impaired students’ acceptance of the help of others depended on their perceived need either to obscure their impairment or to allow their impairment to be known. In addition, Byrne (2014) found that the students were hesitant to ask for help or special accommodation as a result of their impairment. Stephanie showed a certain degree of anxiety about receiving the help of others in the dance class as well as in her academic classes, whereas the “blind” participants stated that they were not afraid to ask for assistance whenever they felt that it was required. By means of partnered dance and interacting with both visually impaired and sighted dancers, Stephanie appeared to learn to accept the help of others, and to become more at ease regarding her impairment.

The Differently-abled Class also provided a context in which most of the participants could establish new friendships and come to experience an enhanced social life. Jessica and Richard, both visually impaired, agreed that the dance society held functions and events which they enjoyed attending because it gave them opportunities to interact with other visually impaired, as well as sighted, dancers. This had the added benefit of instilling in them a sense of belonging and of being members of a community, which is in line with the findings of Cooper and Thomas (2002), and Goodwin et al. (2004). Stephanie, being new to the class at the time of her interview, had not yet come to experience a broader social life than before, although she could already see the potential for establishing new friendships.

The visually impaired participants further stated how the skills and moves that they learned in dance allowed them to engage and interact more effectively in social settings. For example, Richard spoke of how the social skill of dance is one that he can use at parties, and even with people who have had no previous dance experience. The increased opportunities for socialisation and enhanced possibilities for belonging to a larger social group than before contrasts with Lourens' (2015) and Byrne's (2014) findings of a university being a somewhat socially exclusive and isolating experience for many visually impaired students. This is explained by Lourens (2015) in terms of the participants in her study experiencing the phenomenon of not "being seen" by their sighted peers. In the study mentioned, rather than engaging positively with the visually impaired students, it seems that the sighted students either stared at them without concern for their autonomy or privacy, or avoided them entirely. "On the whole, it is therefore evident that the looks or averted eyes of sighted individuals did not contribute to a feeling of being seen" (Lourens, 2015, p. 202). In contrast to these negative social experiences in higher education, Jacklin, Robinson, O'Meara and Harris (2007) conducted a study in Brighton, England in which they found that only 12.5% of the participants expressed their unhappiness about their social experiences, whereas 7.5% of the students stated their unhappiness about their learning and social experiences. In the current study, by means of actively engaging with their nondisabled peers using their dance skills, the visually impaired students opened up a space for positive and meaningful interactions with sighted others, thereby giving able-bodied people the permission to look past their impairment, and hence allowing them to "be seen" and acknowledged as individuals beyond the narrow context of their "disability".

Stephanie also acknowledged that the dance class offered her the opportunity to meet other visually impaired students who “have it way worse than me” (see Chapter Five). She found that this allowed her to learn new coping mechanisms, based on other students’ experiences of university. In addition, other visually impaired students in the dance class, as well as on the university campus, acted as the fellow members of a support group. Thus, the psychosocial development of the visually impaired students was positively impacted on by their experiences. This finding is in agreement with those of Kef (2002), in which the author researched the psychosocial adjustment entailed in, and the meaning of, the provision of social support for visually impaired adolescents.

In terms of physicality, dance appears to offer visually impaired participants a counter experience to that of their supposedly broken, damaged or limited “disabled” body. The participants described gleaning such physical benefits from dance as increased physical fitness and endurance, as well as improved posture, resulting from the demanding physicality of the class, and the need to master the technique required. For some participants, such as Richard, who was born “blind”, dance provides a new bodily experience, requiring him to move in unprecedented ways. Being able to participate in such enriched, embodied experiences allows visually impaired dancers to engage more confidently than they did before with their surroundings.

7.6 The benefits of participation for the sighted partners

As with the visually impaired dancers, the sighted participants also recognised many benefits that they could gain from participating in dance. In this section, how the sighted dancers in the current study perceived that they had been changed through their experiences with their visually impaired partners is discussed.

The sighted dancers spoke of how they had become more patient, compassionate and empathic as a result of becoming aware of their visually impaired partner’s daily functioning and struggles. James described how experiencing such perceptual changes had resulted in a generalised development of the qualities of patience, consideration and sensitivity towards others. For Sarah, her increased awareness of the daily functioning of her visually impaired peers has resulted in an increased curiosity in how the visually impaired cope with day-to-day life. She stated that her mind had been opened to the different ways in which those around her lived.

In the current study, the sighted participants' stereotypical perceptions of visually impaired people as being different from themselves had clearly been challenged through their interactions with them. Sarah described how coming to know her visually impaired peers had helped her to focus on them as individuals, rather than on their classification of being different to herself. Before embarking on his academic career, Shaun stated how he had not encountered visually impaired people in his own age group. Through his interactions with the visually impaired dancers, however, he had come to realise that everyone needed to be treated in the same way, and how, with a little understanding, he had been able to make friends with some of the visually impaired students.

A further benefit to emerge from the sighted participants' interactions with their visually impaired peers was that such encounters were reported to have made the sighted participants more aware of, and grateful for, their visual abilities. James recognised the increased appreciation that he had for his own sight. He further stated that his perceptions of the world had been enriched through his interactions with his visually impaired partner.

These findings appear to have resulted directly from the interactions that the sighted participants had had with their visually impaired peers, which would be consistent with the contact hypothesis. However, it might be premature to state that such is a definitive finding. The contact hypothesis postulates that the interaction that occurs among members of different groups tends to reduce intergroup prejudice if certain optimal conditions are present (Dixon, Durrheim & Tredoux, 2005). The simplicity of this hypothesis appears to have been a point of contention among researchers, with it having produced mixed results. Many studies that have investigated the effectiveness of the contact hypothesis have been conducted on issues of interracial relations and integration (see Binder et al., 2009; Gaertner, Rust, Dovidio, Bachman & Anastasio, 1994; Sigelman & Welch, 1993). Dixon et al. (2005) criticise contact interventions for possibly being "successful in creating small islands of integration in a sea of intolerance, but they are unrepresentative of wider processes of contact and desegregation" (p. 700).

Returning to the current study, on closer inspection the sighted participants appeared to still hold some prejudices that had not yet been challenged, such as lowered expectations regarding the performance of the visually impaired dancers. The holding of such prejudices suggests that the sighted dancers viewed their performance as being superior

to that of the visually impaired dancers, on the basis of their visual abilities. In effect, the implication was present that the sighted dancers did not expect the visually impaired dancers to achieve the same level of skill and mastery in dance as they had achieved. The sighted participants also stated that the Differently-abled Class is a setting in which attention is focused solely on the visually impaired dancers. In this way, the sighted dancers appeared to believe that there was an uneven balance in their partnership, which resulted, once again, in the downplaying of the visually impaired dancers' abilities. This also lends itself to a generalisation of the abilities of the visually impaired dancers, rather than enabling them to be viewed as individuals with differing levels of mastery and ability.

Elements of idealisation surround the visually impaired dancers as well. Most of the sighted participants stated how they believed that the visually impaired dancers were inspirational. Matthew described feeling amazed at how the visually impaired dancers were able to be so independent, and spoke of how he admired them for being able to do what they did on a daily basis. James expressed his admiration of the visually impaired students' sense of drive and motivation to succeed in the face of adversity. Sarah stated her belief that her visually impaired peers should not be burdened by "unnecessary complaining", since they faced so many challenges on a day-to-day basis. The beliefs and perceptions about the visually impaired dancers, as held by their sighted partners, tended to perpetuate the gap between the "us" (i.e. the sighted) and the "them" (i.e. the visually impaired). Clearly, the Differently-abled Class, although viewed favourably by all its participants, had not yet been able to impart a fully integrated and unprejudiced attitude in its sighted members.

7.7 Conclusion

As can be seen from the discussion that has been conducted in this chapter, a major focus on the issue of disability surrounds the concerns that are associated with trying to incorporate visually impaired dancers in the realm of "normalcy". Vincent van Gogh illustrates the problem that lies in the expectations that are set in relation to a standard of normality in saying (Goodreads, 2015, "Vincent van Gogh quotes"): "Normality is a paved road: It's comfortable to walk, but no flowers grow on it." (para. 14). The sighted participants in the current study seemed to be overcome with the desire to make the dance experience as "normal" as possible for their visually impaired partners, while making accommodations to suit the latter's unique needs. While inclusion and accessibility were

viewed as a necessity by both the visually impaired and the sighted participants, the extent to which these principles had been achieved was clearly debatable. While many challenges faced the dancers in the Differently-abled Class, there were many benefits that could be gleaned from participating in the class that made it a worthwhile experience. Challenges aside, the overwhelming and resounding experience of dance for these participants, whether sighted or visually impaired, was that of undeniable enjoyment and pleasure.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This study was conducted using interpretative phenomenological analysis within the theoretical paradigm of social theory in order to give a voice to the visually impaired and sighted dancers' experience of inclusive social ballroom and Latin American dance. While the participants overall collective experience of dance seems to have been positive, the findings suggest that tensions relating to issues of representation and the challenges of inclusion partly marred their experiences. In this concluding chapter, I discuss the limitations of the study, and present my critical reflections on the personal process of conducting this research. Recommendations are also proposed for future research into disability and dance.

8.2 Limitations

The participants in this study offered a rich account of their experiences of inclusive social ballroom dance. Although the participants accounted for 75% of the population of dancers in the Differently-abled Dance Class at the university, the sample was fairly small, with only nine participants (four visually impaired dancers, and five of their sighted partners). It is, therefore, difficult to determine how widespread these experiences are. Further research with similar groups needs to be conducted in order to form a clearer picture of the dance experiences of visually impaired dancers and their sighted partners. Furthermore, giving the dance instructor an opportunity to voice her experiences and concerns with regard to the Differently-abled Class might have added value to this study.

A further limitation regarding the study concerns the representativeness of the sample used. All of the participants were students from the same university. Although they were racially representative of the South African population as a whole, they might not have represented the socio-economic variability of the visually impaired community as such. Additionally, the university is situated in the midst of a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking community. The majority of the participants reported Afrikaans to be their first language. As the interviews were conducted in English, the language used might have partly obfuscated the meaning or intent of the participants' responses.

8.3 Reflexivity: Reflections on my process of conducting research on disability and dance

Before conducting this research, I had had limited contact with persons with disabilities. Identifying as a White, female, able-bodied student, coming from a typically middle class and privileged background, I had not had many opportunities to interact with people with disabilities in my daily life, either through my schooling, or during my university education. The only recollection I have of encountering people with disabilities prior to the study is one of seeing the porcelain statue of a little blonde girl with cerebral palsy in a blue dress and with one leg in a calliper, clutching a teddy bear under one arm and holding a collecting “box” in the other. It was strategically placed at the entrance of shopping centres and grocery stores, where consumers might have loose change handy to place in the box. The purpose of the statue was to collect money for an association for people with cerebral palsy. I do not recall for which specific organisation this little girl was collecting funds. This sight, however, instilled in me a subconscious, stereotypical belief that people with disabilities are “needy”, requiring charity, “desperate”, and in need of sympathy.

My only associations with “blind” people were of guide dogs and white canes. They were a group of people who, in my mind, could not do things for themselves, and who were not a part of my lived experience. I was unaware of the distinction between the terms “disability” and “impairment”, and I did not understand the politics that came along with the use of such terms as “handicapped” and “differently abled”. As far as I knew, such words could be used interchangeably. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I did not come across the field of Disability Studies. No mention was made of the disability rights movement, or of the medical and social models of disability. In hindsight, I believe that the lack of focus on disability in undergraduate studies (and in postgraduate studies, for that matter) in Psychology is a massive oversight in the university curriculum as, especially in South Africa, disability is such a prominent and contemporary social issue. I had clearly grown up in a sheltered world in which people with disabilities were of little relevance. Rather than it having been a matter of conscious exclusion, it had been more of a case of lack of awareness and consciousness.

This naivety had led me to believe that I would have nothing in common with my visually impaired participants and that I would struggle to relate to them and their stories. I was under the impression that the sighted dancers would have more interesting insights into

the nature of inclusive dance. These thoughts were strengthened by my preconceived notion that people with disabilities are not generally as well-educated as are able-bodied individuals. I anticipated that I would hear stories of struggle from the visually impaired students, and that they might tell me how wonderful it was to be included in the dance society. When I began conducting the interviews for my study, however, I had to bracket such preconceptions and allow the visually impaired participants the space to be heard without allowing the intrusion of my stereotypically narrow views. It challenged my biases to hear the visually impaired dancers show an interest in speaking openly about their dance experiences. During the interviews with the sighted dancers, I found myself wanting to defend and advocate for the visually impaired participants on matters of inclusion. It became a challenge to place these biases to one side and to allow the sighted participants the same freedom to speak without interference. I also had to be aware of my inward struggle during the process of data analysis. I found myself more interested in what the visually impaired dancers had to share than did the sighted dancers, as I felt I was learning a great deal from the former. However, I knew that I needed to give equal weight to the thoughts of the sighted dancers, which appeared to be similar to mine.

During the course of this research process, I began hearing such words as “integration”, “inclusion” and “accessibility”, which I had not previously encountered in this context. Thus, my encounters with a “single-storied” group of “blind” people became enjoyable interactions with unique, seemingly “normal” and interesting personalities who awakened in me the realisation of what variety and difference there is in people from all walks of life. With the constant guidance of my supervisor, each and every one of my prejudices and preconceived ideas was challenged. While the journey involved in writing a Master’s thesis proved extremely difficult and tiresome at times, the rate at which I was learning and growing in terms of the field of disability and sport was staggering, and at times, it must be said, confusing. Making sense of the requirements of a Master’s thesis, while being overwhelmed with information obtained in a completely new area, was not without its trials and tribulations. However, I became far more aware of who I am and what I have to offer to the discipline of psychological research. I became aware of my abilities, including that of sight, which throughout my life so far I had taken for granted.

In short, I have come to realise that completing a Master’s degree is not purely about learning how to conduct research. My experiences throughout this process have led to many important and appreciated life lessons, as well as to a renewed sense of purpose

and direction in my chosen career path. While my aim throughout this study was to give a voice to the experiences of dance for visually impaired individuals and their sighted partners, I could not have anticipated the degree of excitement and passion for research that has grown within me as a result of my engagement with others who experience a different world to that which I do. I would not have achieved this without the knowledge, patience, guidance, and, of course, passion, of my supervisor, Dr Jason Bantjes, as well as the freedom afforded to me by my co-supervisor, Professor Liz Bressan.

8.4 Recommendations

The primary aim of this study was to give a voice to visually impaired dancers. A second aim was to afford their sighted dance partners the same opportunity to have their own experiences heard and understood. While this study contributes to the expanding field of knowledge in disability and physical activity studies, it is a fairly new area of research in South Africa. This field could, consequently, benefit greatly from the undertaking of further research to build up a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of inclusive dance. On the basis of such an understanding, strategies for increasing opportunities for participation can be established in coming years. Future research should, therefore, include the investigation of participants from various socio-economic areas and age cohorts. This should allow for comparisons to be drawn in order to gain a more complex and in-depth understanding of the need for, and enjoyment of, inclusive partnered dance forms.

The participants in the current study regarded dance as a spectator sport that is performed for an audience. In South Africa, however, visually impaired audience members have not had the same access to the arts as have their sighted peers. Studies of Narration, otherwise referred to by Kleege (2008, 2014) as Audio Description, are gaining more traction in the global community. Kleege (2008) describes Audio Description as an experimental technology that allows visually impaired audience members to “hear a verbal description of the action, costumes and settings” (p. 3) through special radio receivers when attending a theatre performance. However, further research needs to be conducted in South Africa so as to create awareness and to promote the inclusion of members of the visually impaired community in the appreciation of the arts.

Although the current study was conducted within the theoretical framework of social theory, certain limitations have been associated with this theory as used in disability studies, as was discussed in Chapter Two. Rice et al. (2015) propose using the “body becoming” and “new materialist” theories, as a progression from the use of the more traditional social theory and medical model, in future studies in disability and art research.

As for the Differently-abled Class and dance society that were the focus of the present study, it might be beneficial for them to attend to the issues of representation and inclusion that were highlighted by the visually impaired dancers. These dancers appeared to have strong opinions on such matters, and the society concerned would profit from including the visually impaired dancers in discussions on how to move the society forward cohesively. This, too, could be said for other organisations or dance societies that wish to offer instruction in inclusive dance. Rather than assume knowledge of the requirements for hosting successful inclusive dance classes, it would be far more beneficial to allow people with disabilities to speak for themselves, and to have their opinions and perspectives heard, and acted upon.

8.5 Conclusion

This study undertook to gain insight into the lived experience of inclusive social ballroom dance for visually impaired dancers and their sighted partners. Offering the participants a platform from which they could have their voices heard appeared to be a unique and enlightening experience for all involved. The experience of dance for both the visually impaired dancers and their partners appears to be an interesting and dynamic process that affords all participants concerned a means by which to come to a deeper understanding of themselves, and of others, in ways that are essentially new to them. Considering all the benefits, challenges, limitations, and reflections that have been described above, this research study appears to have had a positive and beneficial impact on all involved, including myself.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Schedule

Visually impaired participants

Biographical details:

1 age

2 nature of impairment

3 length of time impairment has affected everyday living (congenital or acquired)

Experience of dance

4 Please describe what it is like being a visually impaired university student?

5 What is your previous dance experience?

6 Can you tell me how you came to be involved in dance classes at university?

- How long ago?
- Frequency of participation in dance?
- How were you introduced?
- Were you hesitant to join? Why? Why not?

7 What has the experience of participating in dance classes been like for you?

- Expectations (before coming)?
- Experiences (during the class and of participating)?
- Consequences of taking part?
- How does it feel (Emotions)?
- How would you describe the physical sensation of dancing?
- How would you say your impairment affects your experience of dancing?

8 What do you like most about the dance classes?

9 What do you dislike about the classes?

10 Ballroom dance has very formalised steps and moves (compared to some other forms of dance). How would you describe the experience of having to learn these formal steps rather than just move to the music?

11 Can you tell me about other settings / places / times when you dance, other than in ballroom classes at university?

Dance as a partnership

12 What is it like dancing with a partner? A visually sighted partner?

13 How does your partner help or hinder you in your experience of dance?

Effect of dance on life outside the studio

14 What effect, if any, has dance had on other areas of your life?

Perceptions of dance

15 What is your perception of dancers?

16 Do you consider yourself to be a dancer?

17 What does being able to dance mean to you?

Dance as a social experience

18 How do your family and friends feel about your participation in dance?

19 Can you describe the friendships you have formed since joining the dance class?

20 Are these friendships different / similar to your friendships outside of the dance context? And how?

21 What effect, if any, has dance had on your social life?

The future of dance

22 If you could change anything about the dance classes or of your experience of dance, what would you change?

23 What would you say to a visually impaired person who is considering joining dance classes?

24 What other styles of dance would you like to experience? And why?

Sighted participants

Biographical details:

1 age

2 previous dance experience

3 length of time participating in Differently-abled Dance Class

Experience of dance

4 How did you come to be involved in Differently-abled Dance Class at university?

- How long ago?
- Frequency of participation in dance?
- How were you introduced?
- Were you hesitant to join? Why? Why not?

5 Can you tell me what it feels like to dance (emotions and physical sensations)?

6 What do you like most about the dance classes?

7 What do you dislike about the classes?

8 In what ways, if any, do you feel limited in your experience of the dance classes with visually impaired people?

9 Can you describe other settings / places / times you dance outside of classes?

Dance as a partnership

10 What is it like dancing with a partner? A visually impaired partner?

11 How does your partner help or hinder you in your experience of dance?

12 How does your partner's impairment affect your experience of dance?

13 How does it feel to dance with a person with a visual impairment?

14 Is this experience different to dancing with an able-bodied dancer?

Effect of dance on life outside the studio

15 What effect, if any, has dancing with visually impaired people had on other areas of your life?

Perceptions of dance

16 What is your perception of able-bodied dancers?

17 How does your perception of visually impaired dancers differ to that of the able-bodied dancers?

18 Do you consider yourself to be a dancer?

19 What does being able to dance mean to you?

20 What does being able to dance alongside visually impaired people mean to you?

Dance as a social experience

21 How do your family and friends feel about your participation in dance with visually impaired people?

22 Can you describe the friendships you have formed since joining the dance class?

23 Are these friendships different / similar to your friendships outside of the dance context? And how?

24 What effect, if any, has dance, with and without visually impaired people, had on your social life?

The future of dance

25 If you could change anything about the dance classes or of your experience of dance with visually impaired people, what would you change?

26 What would you say to a visually impaired person who is considering joining dance classes?

27 What would you say to a visually sighted person who is considering joining a Differently-abled Dance Class?

28 What other styles of dance would you like to experience? And why?

APPENDIX B: Invitation to Participate

Dear Dancer

I am a Master of Arts (Psychology) student at Stellenbosch University and am currently completing a thesis in order to receive my MA degree.

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on the topic of:

Participation in inclusive social ballroom dance: the lived experiences of university students' with visual impairments and their sighted dance partners'.

The aim of the study is to understand and give a voice to the experiences of young adults with visual impairments, and their sighted partners', who participate in inclusive social ballroom dance.

I feel this is important as the meaning ascribed to the individual's experiences is often overlooked in research and can give insight into what it is like to live with this type of impairment through the context of dance.

Should you wish to learn more about the study or would like to participate, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Faine Bisset

Cell: 073 411 6793

Email: faine.bisset@hotmail.com

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form

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jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Participation in inclusive social ballroom dance: the lived experiences of university students' with visual impairments and their sighted dance partners'

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Faine Bisset, from the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University. The results of this thesis will contribute to obtaining a Master of Arts (MA) degree. The study seeks to understand and explore the lived experiences of visually impaired and sighted dance partners' in inclusive social ballroom dance.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to understand and give a voice to the experiences of young adults with visual impairments, and their sighted partners', who participate in inclusive social ballroom dance. I feel this is important as the meaning ascribed to the individuals' experiences is often overlooked in research and can give insight into what it is like to live with this type of impairment.

2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Participate in a one-on-one audio-taped interview which should take no longer than an hour to complete. The interview will focus on your experiences of dance and the meaning you find in this activity. The interview will take place on the university premises.

3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

Due to the personal nature of the interview process, unacknowledged thoughts or emotions may be brought to the fore. With this in mind, participants will be supplied with a list of support services available to them at their university and in the surrounding area (Please refer to the document entitled 'Participant Support Services'). I will also be available to assist in finding the support they need.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This study could have far reaching benefits, not only for the individuals involved in the study but for visually impaired individuals who would like to have the opportunity to attend dance classes, as well as for researchers who aim to understand the sensitivities of such a study and conduct studies of their own. The participants could benefit from exploring their own experiences of dance and have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings surrounding their impairment and its meaning in their life. Other visually impaired individuals could be afforded the opportunity to attend inclusive dance classes if the importance of such classes is brought into awareness and demonstrated. Further research would assist in highlighting the experiences of dance for this population. This is especially true for the South African context where no studies in the field have been found. Although this appears to be more beneficial to the visually impaired participants, the sighted participants may benefit from having the opportunity to speak about their experiences of dancing with visually impaired partners'.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There will be no payment provided for participation in the research process.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of:

1 Your personal information, as well as the name of your university will not appear anywhere in the research report.
2 You will be assigned a unique identifier so as to uphold anonymity.
3 All material obtained during the research study, especially that which relates to you (audio tapes, transcribed interviews, et cetera), will be stored in a secure location which only myself and my supervisor have access to. Should you wish to review the transcribed interview or final report, this can be arranged directly with me.
4 My supervisor, Dr Jason Bantjes, will have access to my study throughout the research process and is bound by the same rules of confidentiality.

5 The results of this study will not be given to anyone else without prior consent.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

Miss Faine Bisset (primary investigator)

021 713 2411

Or 073 411 6793

OR

Dr Jason Bantjes (research supervisor)

021 808 2665

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

The information above was described to me by Faine Bisset in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____

Name of Subject/Participant

_____

Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____ _____

Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal Representative **Date**

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____ and/or [his/her] representative _____. *[H*e/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator **Date**

APPENDIX D: Participant Support Services

Participant Support Services

On-campus support

- Centre for Student Counselling and Development
  Phone: 082 557 0880
  Address: 49 Victoria Street, Stellenbosch
  Website: http://www0.sun.ac.za/cscdnew/english
  http://www0.sun.ac.za/cscdnew/afrikaans
  Therapy and Personal Development Division
  Focus: Short-term therapy and crisis-management
  Group and individual therapy sessions

Off-campus support

- LifeLine Western Cape
  Phone: 021 461 1111
  Website: www.lifeline.co.za
  Focus: 24hour crisis and counselling line
  Certain centres offer face-to-face counselling services

- Psychologists in the Stellenbosch area

1. Ms Lisa Padfield (Clinical Psychologist)
   MA. Clin. Psych. & Community Counselling (Stellenbosch University)
   Phone: 072 922 6322
   Address: 18 Tarentaal Street
   Onderpapegaaiberg
   Stellenbosch

   Special Interest: Adjustment issues (coping with life changes such as retirement, retrenchment, a break-up or divorce, a health crisis, etc.)

• Anxiety (including coping with panic attacks)
Depression
End-of-life issues (aging, death and dying)
Loss and bereavement
Stress
Relationship problems (including same-sex relationships)
I also have a particular interest in group processes, including educational, mentoring, therapeutic, supervisory and support groups.

2. Mr JP Theron (Clinical Psychologist)
   3 Year Course in Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy with Personality Disorders (International Masterson Institute - New York)
   MA Clin. Psych. (Tuks)
   BA Hnrs (Psych.) (Stell)
   HED in Teaching (Stell)
   BA Human Movement Studies (Stell)
   Phone: 082 881 1340
   Address: Eden Health
   De Wet Centre Courtyard
   Cnr Bird and Church Street
   Stellenbosch
   7600
   Special Interest: Personality Structure
   Relationship Difficulties
   Difficulties with a sense of self
   Anxiety
   Depression

3. Mr André Pieterse (Counselling Psychologist)
   BSc Hons (Stell) MSc (Natal)
   Phone: 021 949 5198
   083 232 3853

Address: First Floor
Eikestadmall
Stellenbosch
7599

Special Interest: Individual and family therapy
Couples counselling
Managing life crises and stressors
Handling family issues
Addictions
Testing of children and adults
Forensic Evaluations
Hypnosis

4. Ms Ilse Jordaan (Clinical Psychologist)
M.Sc. Psychology (Stellenbosch) M.A. Clin. Psych. (UPE)
Phone: 021 886 9950
Address: Unit 19F Oewerpark
Rokewood Avenue
Stellenbosch
7600

Special Interest: In-Depth Adult Psychotherapy
Psychosomatic Disorders
Mind-Body Medicine (link between stress and disease)
Eating Disorders (e.g., overweight, anorexia, bulimia)
Trauma & Sexual Abuse
Gay/Lesbian Issues
Relationships & Sexuality
Personal Growth
Hypnotherapy & Medical Hypnoanalysis
Chronic Depression/Anxiety
Coping with Chronic Disease
EMDR II (for trauma)
Borderline Personality Organization

5. Mrs Liezl van Rooyen (Clinical Psychologist)
   MA Clin.Psych. (Rhodes)
   Phone: 021 883 2681
   072 246 7505
   Address: Buitekring
   Dalsig
   Stellenbosch
   Email: lvrpsychotherapy@gmail.com
   Special Interest: Trauma
   Traumatic Loss and Bereavement
   Anxiety Disorders
   Mood Disorders
   Eating Disorders
   Psychotic Disorders
   Personality Pathology
   Adjustment to Parenting
   Post-Partum Depression
   Personal Growth/Self-actualisation/Phase of Life Issues
   Termination of Pregnancy (pre- and post-counselling)
   Play Therapy
   Autistic Spectrum Disorders

6. Ms Elizma Bellingan (Arts Psychotherapist)
   B.A Hons Psych (Stell);
   M.A Couns Psych (USA)
   Phone: 083 871 0333
   Address: Stellenbosch and Somerset West
   Special Interest: Therapy with adults and couples
   Depression
   Anxiety
   Stress management
   Trauma counselling
   Relationship Difficulties
   Life transitions
   Grief & Loss (death, illness, divorce etc)

Spiritual Growth & Development
Group Work - Holotropic Breathwork

7. Dr Irene Strydom (Counselling and Educational Psychologist)
   DEd (Unisa), MA Counselling Psychology (Univ Pta), MEd Educ Psych (Unisa), MEd Counselling Psych (Unisa), Hons BEd (Unisa), Hons BEd Endorsement (Unisa), Diploma Ed, BPrim (Univ Stellenbosch)
   Phone: 082 956 4080
   Address: 66B Burg Street
   Wellington
   7655
   Special Interest: Psychology assessments
   Psychotherapy
   Trauma Counselling

Source: http://www.psychotherapy.co.za/GeckoLinks_page.asp?TYP=6&SubID=81